

**AN INTEGRATED APPROACH FOR MAHUA SEED CAKE  
UTILIZATION**

by

**ADITI GUPTA**

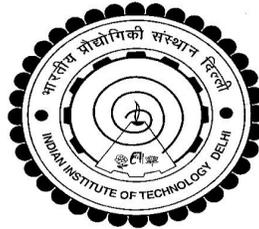
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**MY PARENTS**

# **CERTIFICATE**

*This is to certify that the thesis entitled 'An Integrated Approach for Mahua Seed Cake Utilization' submitted by Ms. Aditi Gupta has been prepared under my guidance with the rules and regulations of Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, India. The research report and results presented in the thesis have not been submitted for any degree or diploma in any other institute or university.*

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## ***ABSTRACT***

In the present scenario of rising populations and energy crisis, bio-diesel from non-edible oil seeds offers a promising alternative amongst various renewable sources being scrutinized. Jatropha and karanja oils have been successfully used for the production of bio-diesel. Recently, mahua oil methyl esters have also been prepared with their fuel properties closely related to diesel along with reduced emissions of carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons and oxides of nitrogen. After the extraction of oil from their respective seed kernels, a large part of the seed material is left as seed cake. Owing to the presence of toxins in them, these seed cakes find limited use. The production of bio-diesel can be made more sustainable if this large amount of biomass generated can be managed properly and safely disposed. Seed cakes of jatropha, neem, karanja, etc have already been used as fertilizers, biopesticides and substrates for the production of biogas and other value added products. However, not much work has been done on mahua seed cake. The present study attempted to design an integrated approach for effective utilization of mahua cake through biopesticidal evaluation of its active components, biogas production, mushroom cultivation and subsequent vermi-culturing.

Mahua cake used in the present study was identified as *Madhuca indica* J.F. Gmel syn. *Madhuca longifolia* (L.) J.F. Macbr. It was rich in sugars, proteins and contained 12-16% saponins as its major active component. Crude saponins were found to be a mixture of three compounds, out of which Mi-saponin A and Mi-saponin B were identified. The mixture was hydrolyzed and subsequently, purified prosapogenin (3-O- $\beta$ -D-glucopyranosyl protobassic acid) and sapogenin (bassic acid) were isolated and structurally characterized using various spectroscopic techniques. Saponins and purified prosapogenin, sapogenin were effective against *Odontotermes obesus* termites, *Meloidogyne incognita* nematodes and certain phytopathogenic fungi. 100% termite mortality was achieved with 10% prosapogenin in 18 h and 10% saponins in 24 h. Sapogenin, on the other hand, gave a relatively poor performance. Similar results were obtained for the nematicidal activity with 1% proapogenin showing 100% J2 juvenile immobility in 48 h. It was observed that monodesmodic saponins (saponin with one sugar chain, i.e., prosapogenin) were found to be more effective against

termites and nematodes as compared to bidesmodic saponins. Saponins were also able to completely inhibit the growth of *C. dematium*, *F. solani* and *F. oxysporum* at test concentrations of 5, 7 and 10%, respectively. On the other hand, mahua cake did not inhibit the growth of *A. niger* and *R. oryzae* fungi. Preliminary experiments on protease production from these two fungi were also carried out using cake as the substrate for solid state fermentation. When mixed with cow dung in appropriate amounts, mahua cake (especially when detoxified by water treatments) was found to yield significant production of biogas. Maximum biogas volume of  $442 \pm 5.5$  L/kg total solids, along with 55-57% methane content, was obtained from the treatment containing 50% cow dung and 50% hot water treated detoxified mahua seed cake (approximately 75% saponin removal). This gave an increase of 125% in the biogas volume produced over cow dung (control). Significant decrease in celluloses and hemicelluloses and an increase in the nutrient content (N, P, K) of the digested slurries was obtained. Mahua cake, especially when freed of saponins, was also found to significantly increase the yield and nutrient content of *P. sajor-caju* mushrooms on wheat straw. Highest biological efficiency of 115.5% was achieved from supplementation of wheat straw with 20% biogas slurry of the combination containing 50% hot water treated detoxified mahua seed cake and 50% cow dung. Mushroom fruit bodies were found to be rich in proteins, amino acids and minerals (N, P, K, Fe, Zn, Mn) but low in fat and sugar content. HPLC studies confirmed the absence of any saponin residues in both mushroom fruit bodies and spent. Significant degradation of celluloses, hemicelluloses and lignin (qualitatively monitored *via* FTIR and quantitatively estimated) was found in spent which also possessed good manurial values. Biogas slurries and mushroom spents obtained above very well supported the growth and reproduction of *Eisenia fetida* earthworms, giving rise to quality vermi-manure. Biomanure and biopesticides thus obtained from our work could be utilized for the growth of mahua/other plants. An integrated approach for resourceful utilization of mahua cake is thus presented here.

## ***CONTENTS***

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Contents</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>List of Figures</b>	<b>xv</b>
<b>List of Tables</b>	<b>xix</b>
<b>List of Plates</b>	<b>xxiii</b>
<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>xxv</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1-15</b>
<b>1.1. Background</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2. The energy scenario: status, problems and alternatives</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.3. Energy from biomass: bio-fuels</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.4. Non-edible oils for bio-diesel production</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.5. Non-edible oil seed cakes: production and utilization</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1.6. Mahua oil seed cake</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>1.7. Major findings from the literature</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>1.8. Scope of work</b>	<b>13</b>
1.8.1. Evaluation of biopesticidal potential of mahua cake	13
1.8.2. Biotechnological applications of mahua cake	13
1.8.3. Energy production using mahua cake	14
1.8.4. Mushroom production using mahua cake and subsequent vermi-culturing	14
<b>1.9. Objectives of the present work</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE</b>	<b>17-55</b>

<b>2.1. Energy crisis and <i>M. indica</i></b>	17
<b>2.2. Mahua (<i>Madhuca species</i>)</b>	18
2.2.1. Phenology	18
2.2.2. Taxonomy and ecology	19
2.2.3. Agronomy	20
2.2.4. Species and distribution	21
2.2.5. Different parts of mahua and their uses Mahua oil seed	24
2.2.6. Mahua flowers	24
2.2.7. Mahua oil seed	30
2.2.8. Mahua oil seed cake	34
2.2.8.1. <i>Toxicity of mahua seed cake</i>	36
2.2.8.2. <i>Saponins-structure, occurrence and classification</i>	38
2.2.8.3. <i>Saponins in mahua</i>	40
2.2.8.4. <i>Toxicity of mahua saponins</i>	42
2.2.8.5. <i>Detoxification of mahua seed cake</i>	43
<b>2.3. Biopesticidal potential of saponins</b>	45
<b>2.4. Oil seed cakes for enzyme production</b>	47
<b>2.5. Oil seed cakes for biogas production</b>	48
<b>2.6. Oil seed cakes for mushroom cultivation</b>	49
<b>2.7. Vermi-composting</b>	52
<b>CHAPTER 3: MATERIALS AND METHODS</b>	<b>57-82</b>
<b>3.1. Characterization of mahua seed cake</b>	57
3.1.1. Procurement of mahua seed cake and its identification	57
3.1.2. Analysis of nutritional and other components of mahua cake	58

3.1.3. Extraction of active (toxic) components from mahua cake	58
3.1.4. Characterization of mahua saponins	59
3.1.4.1. <i>Thin layer chromatography (TLC)</i>	59
3.1.4.2. <i>High performance liquid chromatography (HPLC)</i>	59
3.1.4.3. <i>Electron spray ionization mass spectrometry (ESI-MS)</i>	61
3.1.5. Hydrolysis of mahua saponins: formation of prosapogenin & sapogenin	61
3.1.5.1. <i>Column chromatography</i>	62
3.1.5.2. <i>Identification of product(s) by ESI-MS</i>	62
3.1.5.3. <i>Identification of product(s) by NMR spectroscopy</i>	62
3.1.5.4. <i>Confirmation of sapogenin structure: formation of acetate</i>	64
3.1.5.5. <i>Identification of sugars by paper chromatography</i>	64
<b>3.2. Evaluation of biopesticidal potential of mahua cake</b>	64
3.2.1. Preparation of aqueous extract and extracts of active components	64
3.2.2. Biopesticidal activity of mahua cake against termites ( <i>O. obesus</i> )	65
3.2.2.1. <i>Collection and maintenance of termites</i>	65
3.2.2.2. <i>Termiticidal assay</i>	65
3.2.3. Biopesticidal activity of mahua cake against nematodes ( <i>M. incognita</i> )	67
3.2.3.1. <i>Collection of nematode juveniles (J2)</i>	67
3.2.3.2. <i>Nematicidal assay</i>	67
3.2.4. Biopesticidal activity of mahua cake against phytopathogenic fungi	68
3.2.4.1. <i>Procurement and maintenance of fungal cultures</i>	68
3.2.4.2. <i>Effect of autoclaving on mahua saponins</i>	68
3.2.4.3. <i>Fungicidal assay</i>	69
3.2.5. Solid state fermentation of mahua cake: protease production	69

<b>3.3. Biogas production using raw and detoxified mahua cake</b>	72
3.3.1. Substrates	72
3.3.2. Experimental set up	72
3.3.3. Chemical analysis	73
<b>3.4. Mushroom cultivation</b>	75
3.4.1. Mushroom cultivation using raw/detoxified mahua cake & biogas slurries	75
3.4.1.1. <i>Substrate preparation</i>	75
3.4.1.2. <i>Experimental set up</i>	75
3.4.1.3. <i>Harvesting of fruit bodies and determination of BE</i>	76
3.4.1.4. <i>Chemical analysis of mushroom fruit bodies</i>	78
3.4.1.4.1. Soluble sugar assay	78
3.4.1.4.2. Amino acid assay	79
3.4.1.4.3. Analysis of saponin residues- HPLC studies	79
3.4.1.4.4. Chromatographic conditions	79
3.4.1.4.5. Degradation of complex molecules	80
3.4.2. Vermi-culturing of <i>E. fetida</i>	80
3.4.2.1. <i>Procurement and rearing of E. fetida</i>	80
3.4.2.2. <i>Preparation of different substrates</i>	81
3.4.2.3. <i>Analysis and observations</i>	81
<b>3.5. Statistical analysis</b>	81
<b>CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION</b>	<b>83- 218</b>
<b>4.1. Characterization of mahua cake</b>	83
<b>4.1A. Results</b>	83

4.1A.1. Identification of mahua cake	83
4.1A.2. Analysis of nutritional and toxic components of mahua cake	83
4.1A.3. Use of green solvents for toxin removal from mahua cake	83
4.1A.4. Characterization of mahua saponins	87
4.1A.4.1. <i>Thin layer chromatography (TLC)</i>	87
4.1A.4.2. <i>High performance liquid chromatography (HPLC)</i>	87
4.1A.4.3. <i>Electron spray ionization mass spectrometry (ESI-MS)</i>	87
4.1A.5. Hydrolysis of mahua saponins	89
4.1A.5.1. <i>Formation of prosapogenin</i>	89
4.1A.5.2. <i>Spectral characterization of purified prosapogenin</i>	89
4.1A.5.3. <i>Formation of sapogenin</i>	93
4.1A.5.4. <i>Spectral characterization of purified sapogenin</i>	93
4.1A.5.5. <i>Identification of sugars</i>	97
<b>4.1B. Discussion</b>	98
4.1B.1. Nutritional and toxic components of mahua cake	98
4.1B.2. Use of green solvents for toxin removal from mahua cake	98
4.1B.3. Characterization of mahua saponins	100
4.1B.4. Hydrolysis of mahua saponins	104
<b>4.2. Evaluation of biopesticidal potential of mahua cake</b>	107
<b>4.2A. Results</b>	107
4.2A.1. Biopesticidal activity of mahua cake against termites ( <i>O. obesus</i> )	107
4.2A.2. Biopesticidal activity of mahua cake against nematodes ( <i>M. incognita</i> )	112
4.2A.3. Biopesticidal activity of mahua cake against phytopathogenic fungi	115

4.2A.3.1. <i>Effect of autoclaving conditions on mahua saponins</i>	115
4.2A.3.2. <i>Growth of phytopathogenic fungi on mahua cake</i>	117
4.2A.3.3. <i>Effect of mahua saponins, purified prosapogenin &amp; sapogenin</i>	118
4.2A.4. Solid state fermentation of mahua cake: protease production	121
4.2A.4.1. <i>Degradation of mahua saponins by A. niger and R. oryzae in SSF</i>	124
<b>4.2B. Discussion</b>	127
4.2B.1. Biopesticidal activity of mahua cake against termites ( <i>O. obesus</i> )	127
4.2B.2. Biopesticidal activity of mahua cake against nematodes ( <i>M. incognita</i> )	131
4.2B.3. Biopesticidal activity of mahua cake against phytopathogenic fungi	133
4.2B.3.1. <i>Effect of autoclaving conditions on mahua saponins</i>	133
4.2B.3.2. <i>Effect of mahua cake and its active constituents on fungi growth</i>	134
4.2B.4. Solid state fermentation of mahua cake: protease production	137
<b>4.3. Biogas production using raw and detoxified mahua cake</b>	142
<b>4.3A. Results</b>	142
4.3A.1. Characteristics of the starting materials	142
4.3A.2. Batch experiments	144
4.3A.2.1. <i>Effect of mahua cake on biogas volume and quality</i>	144
4.3A.2.2. <i>Effect on pH</i>	148
4.3A.2.3. <i>Effect on TS, VS and VFA content</i>	148
4.3A.3. Degradation of complex molecules in biogas slurry	149
4.3A.4. Manurial value of digested biogas slurry	152
<b>4.3B. Discussion</b>	154

4.3B.1. Characteristics of the starting materials	154
4.3B.2. Batch experiments	155
4.3B.2.1. <i>Effect of mahua cake on biogas volume and quality</i>	155
4.3B.2.2. <i>Effect on pH</i>	158
4.3B.2.3. <i>Effect on TS, VS and VFA content</i>	159
4.3B.3. Degradation of complex molecules in biogas slurry	159
4.3B.4. Manurial value of digested biogas slurry	160
<b>4.4. Mushroom cultivation</b>	161
<b>4.4A. Results</b>	161
4.4A.1. Mushroom cultivation using raw and detoxified mahua cakes	161
4.4A.1.1. <i>Characteristics of substrates</i>	161
4.4A.1.2. <i>Yield characteristics of fruit bodies</i>	165
4.4A.1.3. <i>Biological efficiency (BE) and substrate dry matter loss</i>	167
4.4A.1.4. <i>Proximate analysis of fruit bodies</i>	167
4.4A.1.5. <i>Soluble sugar content of fruit bodies- HPLC studies</i>	170
4.4A.1.6. <i>Amino acid content of fruit bodies- HPLC studies</i>	172
4.4A.1.7. <i>Mineral content of fruit bodies</i>	173
4.4A.1.8. <i>Analysis of saponin residues- HPLC studies</i>	176
4.4A.1.9. <i>Degradation of complex molecules and manurial value of spent</i>	176
4.4A.2. Mushroom cultivation using biogas slurries of detoxified mahua cake	180
4.4A.2.1. <i>Characteristics of substrates</i>	180
4.4A.2.2. <i>Yield characteristics of fruit bodies</i>	183
4.4A.2.3. <i>Biological efficiency (BE) and substrate dry matter loss</i>	185
4.4A.2.4. <i>Proximate analysis of fruit bodies</i>	185

4.4A.2.5. Soluble sugar content of fruit bodies- HPLC studies	188
4.4A.2.6. Amino acid content of fruit bodies- HPLC studies	188
4.4A.2.7. Mineral content of fruit bodies	192
4.4A.2.8. Analysis of saponin residues- HPLC studies	192
4.4A.2.9. Degradation of complex molecules and manurial value of spent	195
4.4A.3. Vermi-culturing of <i>Eisenia fetida</i>	198
4.4A.3.1. Effect of different substrates on number of <i>E. fetida</i>	198
4.4A.3.2. Manurial value of vermi-compost produced	200
<b>4.4B. Discussion</b>	201
4.4B.1. Mushroom cultivation	201
4.4B.1.1. Characteristics of substrates	201
4.4B.1.2. Yield characteristics of fruit bodies	202
4.4B.1.3. Biological efficiency (BE) and substrate dry matter loss	206
4.4B.1.4. Proximate analysis of fruit bodies	207
4.4B.1.5. Soluble sugar content of fruit bodies- HPLC studies	210
4.4B.1.6. Amino acid content of fruit bodies- HPLC studies	211
4.4B.1.7. Mineral content of fruit bodies	211
4.4B.1.8. Analysis of saponin residues- HPLC studies	212
4.4B.1.9. Degradation of complex molecules and manurial value of spent	213
4.4B.2. Vermi-culturing of <i>Eisenia fetida</i>	215
4.4B.2.1. Effect of different substrates on number of <i>E. fetida</i>	215
4.4B.2.2. Manurial value of vermi-compost produced	217

<b>5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES</b>	<b>219-233</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>235-256</b>
<b>CURRICULUM VITAE</b>	<b>257-260</b>