

**STUDY OF MICROBE PLANT INTERACTION IN RELATION TO
RICE AND *Rhizobium leguminosarum* bv. *trifolii* SN10**

By

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Submitted

in fulfillment of the requirement of the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

to the



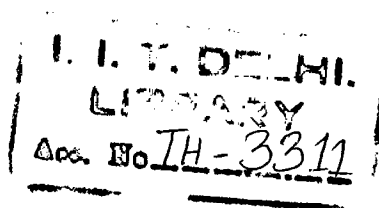
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, DELHI

November 2005

legumes - rice

Harvesting - Non legumes

Rice - microbe plant interaction



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To my parents

In eternal gratitude

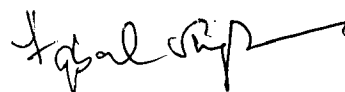
For the nest, the compass, and the wings

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**STUDY OF MICROBE PLANT INTERACTION IN RELATION TO RICE AND *Rhizobium leguminosarum* bv. *trifolii*SN10**” being submitted by **Ms. RUMPA BISWAS** to the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, for the award of the degree of ‘**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**’, is a record of the bonafide research work carried out by her, which has been prepared under our supervision in conformity with the rules and regulations of the “Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi”. The research reports and the results presented in this thesis have not been submitted for any degree or diploma in any other University or Institute.



Prof.S.N.Mukhopadhyay



Dr. Aqbal Singh

Acknowledgements

This thesis is the result of five years of work whereby I have been accompanied and supported by many people. I take this opportunity to remember their contributions and convey my sincere gratitude to all of them.

The first person I would like to thank is my supervisor, Prof. S.N. Mukhopadhyay. During these years I have known him as an understanding, caring and principle-centered person. His timely advice, valuable suggestions, patience, cooperation, foresight and continuous encouragement inspired me to sail through tough phases of this work with a positive attitude. I owe him lot of gratitude for having shown me this day. I extend my deep sense of gratitude to my co-supervisor Dr. Aqbal Singh from IARI for his admirable help, guidance and encouragement during this work. His valuable suggestions carved the way for me to this research.

To my supervisor in France, Dr. Dreyfus Bernard, I remain indebted for his invaluable and timely help which enabled me to secure a place in the "PhD Sandwich Programme" sponsored by the Government of France. His invaluable guidance, interest, constant encouragement and exclusive academic contribution towards my research helped me to draw a tangible conclusion from my work. His enthusiasm and integral view on research has made a deep impression on me.

I would also like to thank other members of my PhD committee who monitored my work and took effort in reading and providing me with valuable comments on earlier versions of this thesis: Prof. Saroj Mishra, Dr. P.K. Roychoudhury and Dr. S.K. Khare. I'm thankful to Prof. Saroj Mishra, ex- Head and Prof. A.K. Srivastava, present Head of department for providing the required facilities to carry out this work. I'm also thankful to other faculty members of this department for their help and support. Special thanks to Dr. P.K. Roychoudhury for boosting my moral throughout the tenure.

I sincerely thank Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), for funding my research at IIT.

I'm obliged to Dr. V. Sikka for providing me the strains with which I initiated my work and Prof. Barry Rolfe for the construct. I'm thankful to Phillipe Jounard for his help in designing my experiments during my stay in "Laboratoire des symbioses tropicales et méditerranéennes (LSTM)" and teaching me the technical skills of research. My heartfelt thanks to Joel Fardoux for familiarizing me with techniques in molecular biology. To Eric Giraud, I remain thankful for chalking out the strategy for the cloning experiment of my work. I tender my full appreciation and thanks to all my colleagues in LSTM, France, Chaintreuil Clemence, Christine, Joe Chrishtope, Chaihinez, Munia. Abdla, Catherine,

Dharshini. Back in the apartment Zahra's recipes and her company helped me forget all my worry. Mr. and Mrs. Bala helped me in my stay. Together they made Montpellier "a home away from home" for me.

I take this opportunity to thank Salony for all her affection, critical suggestions and support during my work. Her encouragement and positive approach helped me in overcoming various critical situations. I'm also thankful to Pranita for being a wonderful friend and a senior. My sincere thanks to my lab mates Bhawna, Parul, Anjali, Anand, Ruhi, Shubhankar, Asif and Ranjita whose company helped me cheer at difficult period. . Special thanks to Richa and Sunita ma'm for helping me out at the final stages of my thesis correction. With Nivedita I had spent the best days of my life in Ph.D. I'm also thankful to my colleagues Ruchi, Vibha, Gunjan, Usha, Shilpa and Nidhi for their help and cooperation. My heartfelt thanks to Bhawna Aggrawal for her timely help, care and support, which made the last few months of stay in the campus interesting and lively.

I would like to thank Mr. V.K.Ghosh for the guidance, he provided with his immense knowledge in microbiology. My thanks to Kishen for helping me out with the chemicals in the lab, and Ram Gopal for cleaning up the lab and glasswares whenever required. I would like to thank Mr. Mukesh Anand, Renu m'am, Ranaji, Yadavji, Khan Sahab and Baghwan Singhji, Meherchand and Swapan Patra for helping with computer related work. My special thanks to Neera m'am for helping me find various books and journals whenever I required. I would also like to thank the office staff, Mrs. Meena Mathur, Mr. D.S.Tarzan, Mrs. Sunita Dhang, Babulalji and Rajeev for being there whenever I needed their help.

To Baba and Mamoni, I remain grateful for being understanding and considerate towards my work. Without their support I would not have been able to complete my work smoothly. I'm thankful to Ruku for his love, care and affection.

I feel a deep gratitude to Ma and Bapi for their selfless sacrifices, guidance, faith, encouragement and love that has helped in shaping my future. My father's principle in life "Whatever happens is for good" has always helped me in over coming difficult phases. Mere words are just insufficient to acknowledge their contributions. I am also thankful to my other family members for their blessings.

I would like to thank my younger brother Anupam, who in spite of his busy activities always had the time for "Didi", to encourage her, to listen to her problems and give his valuable suggestions. He will always be the integral part of my dreams and aspirations.

Lastly, I am grateful to my husband Sujay for the inspiration and moral support he provided throughout my research work which helped me tiding over the phases of depression. He has always borne with my problems patiently without ever complaining. His presence is the most valuable asset of my life. Without his loving support, my parents' wish to see their daughter achieve the highest degree would have remained a dream.

I conclude my acknowledgement thanking the "Almighty" for what I have today and praying for my ailing friend "Devapriya" who's thought brings tears to my eyes. Hope she regains her senses one day.....

ABiswas

Rumpa

ABSTRACT

Nitrogen is an essential nutrient which often limits plant growth and productivity. The extension of symbiotic nitrogen fixation to non-legumes, mostly cereal crops has been a long outstanding goal. Presently many workers have found that the nitrogen fixing bacteria are capable of associating endophytically with nonlegumes like rice, wheat and maize which in turn promotes growth and development of the plant. One such growth promoting endophyte is *Rhizobium leguminosarum* *bv. trifolii* isolated from the rhizosphere and roots of rice in Egypt.

In our study we have used a strain of *R. leguminosarum* *bv. trifolii* (SN10) isolated from the nodules of its host legume Berseem clover (*Trifolium alexandrinum*) from Hissar, India. Its association with a local rice variety *Oryza sativa japonica* (Kdulam), strongly promoted both plant growth and development: shoot and root biomasses were increased up to 61% and 48%, respectively, when compared to the uninoculated rice. In addition, root branching was enhanced from 6 to 12 roots per plant while total nitrogen plant content was augmented to 21%. The bacteria successfully colonized root surfaces of the rice along the grooves, emerging lateral roots and also between epidermal cell junctions. Bacteria were even observed within roots. Moreover, seed and root exudates from this rice variety were capable of inducing an *in vitro* bacterial chemotactic response in *R. trifolii*. However, *O. sativa* does not release any phenolic signaling molecule which could play a role in chemotaxis or effectively induce *nod* genes of the bacteria. On the contrary, *O. sativa japonica* seed and root exudates were found to contain a coumarin, umbelliferone, which constituted almost 37% of the total phenolic content of the

exudates. Umbelliferone, which is known to possess antifungal and antibacterial properties, however had no effects on the bacterial colonization but inhibited *R. trifolii* SN10 *nod* gene expression. This was confirmed using a construct *R. trifolii* SN12 where the inducible *nodA* promoter of *R. trifolii* SN10 was amplified, sequenced and cloned upstream of *E.coli lacZ* in pCM132. By using a *nodA-lacZ* fusion, we showed that both umbelliferone and rice seed exudates inhibit the *nod* gene induction confirming that bacterial *nod* factors are not implied in rice growth. However, umbelliferone had no effect on *R. trifolii* SN10 rice root colonization. Then, the bacterium was found to secrete plant growth promoting compound, indole acetic acid (IAA). We conclude that the growth promotion of *O. sativa japonica* by *R. trifolii* SN10 are due plant growth promoting rhizobacterial (PGPR) interactions.

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