

SCALE-UP OF PHB PRODUCTION USING DIFFERENT BACTERIAL SPECIES

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by

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Submitted
in fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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*Dedicated
To
My beloved
Parents, Wife,
Relatives and Friends*

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “*Scale-up of PHB production using different bacterial species*” being submitted by **Mr. Sanjay Kumar** 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 him under my guidance and supervision, in conformity with rules and regulations of the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi. The research reports and results presented in the thesis have not been submitted in part or full to any other university or institute for the award of any degree/diploma.

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Date:

Sanjay Kumar

Place:

ABSTRACT

PHB, a bioplastic was explored as an alternative to conventional plastics because it has similar physical properties to polypropylene. Additionally, its properties like complete biodegradability, biocompatibility, barrier to water droplets & oxygen made it a useful biopolymer for various societal applications. It was evidenced by various literature and present study that this bioplastic could be produced from both gram-negative and gram-positive bacterial species.

The primary objective of the present investigation was to establish a successful scale-up protocol for the transfer of our existing leads of various bacterial species (*Azohydromonas australica*, *Cupriavidus necator*, *Bacillus thuringiensis*) at lab scale bioreactor (7 L) to the pilot-scale bioreactor (300 L) in batch and fed-batch cultivation conditions. To establish a successful scale-up protocol, initially, the geometrical similarities between small and big scale bioreactors were examined wherein it was assessed if the physical boundaries of the two bioreactor cultivation systems are similar and in geometrical proportion to each other. The dynamic similarity of the bioreactor systems was, thereafter, ensured by comparing the relative value of flow affecting intensive parameters (P/V , KLa , Π , t_m , NRe , Q/V) in the model (small) and prototype (big reactor), by keeping one of the intensive parameters constant in both (small & big bioreactors) & evaluating its effects on the rest of the scale-up parameters through the relative ratio (parametric index) of scale-up parameters. Constant P/V scale-up criteria, invariably, emerged as the most suitable criteria for the successful transfer of results of all the small scale bioreactor cultivations to 70 / 300 L bioreactor cultivation.

Batch cultivation of *A. australica*, *C. necator* and *B. thuringiensis* were performed in 7 L bioreactor for 33 hours, 54 hours and 36 hours. At the end of batch cultivation, *A. australica*, *C. necator* and *B. thuringiensis* in 7 L bioreactor featured maximum biomass of 8.66 g/L, 12.46 g/L, and 7.29 g/L respectively whereas PHB accumulated were of 6.53 g/L, 8.61 g/L, 3.69 g/L respectively. The maximum productivity of *A. australica*, *C. necator* and *B. thuringiensis* were of 0.197 g/L/h, 0.159

g/L/h, and 0.102 g/L/h respectively whereas PHB yields were of 0.285 g/g, 0.261 g/g, 0.548 g/g respectively. It was possible to duplicate these results up to 300 L batch bioreactor cultivation using P/V scale-up criteria. To further demonstrate the successful transfer of the results by selected scale-up criteria to 15 & 70 L bioreactor cultivations, the model-based fed-batch bioreactor cultivation (7 L) of *A. australica* (Gahlawat & Srivastava, 2013) with constant feeding rate strategy, *C. necator* (Sharma et al., 2015) & *B. thuringiensis* (Verma et al., 2019) with pseudosteadystate feeding rate strategy were selected. For this purpose, the mathematical model was simulated again on a computer with the changed volumes (for 15 & 70 L) to reidentify the respective changed feeding rates during fed-batch cultivation. The fed-batch cultivations were then experimentally implemented in 15 &/or 70 L bioreactor wherein it was possible to duplicate the leads of 7 L fed-batch cultivation in terms of concentrations, yield and productivity.

To extract the intracellular PHB produced, chemical digestion of biomass with Sodium Dodecyl Sulphate and Sodium hypochlorite was followed by the solvent extraction method using chloroform (Hahn et al., 1994) which featured a maximum recovery of PHB from the biomass of *C. necator* and *B. thuringiensis* as 69.5 % and 40.57 % respectively.

GPC analysis of PHB recovered from the biomass of *C. necator* featured the weight average molecular weight (M_w), number average molecular weight (M_n), and polydispersity index (M_w/M_n) of 115 kDa, 36 kDa, and 3.19 respectively, whereas incase of *B. thuringiensis* these findings were of 124 kDa, 48.1 kDa, and 2.58 respectively. The TGA analysis of PHB recovered from *C. necator* biomass featured the thermal degradation pattenen of PHB which indicated that 5 %, 85 %, and 100 % of the total mass of PHB was degraded at 225 °C, 290 °C, and 500 °C respectively whereas incase of *B. thuringiensis*, 5 %, and 95 % of PHB was theremally degraded at 239 °C and 276 °C respectively. FTIR spectra of PHB recovered from the biomass of *C. necator* identified the functional group carbonyl, methyl (stretching mode), methyl (bending mode) at 1720 cm^{-1} , 1380 cm^{-1} , 1450 cm^{-1} respectively. Whereas, incase of *B. thuringiensis* these functional groups were

identified at 1720 cm^{-1} , 1380 cm^{-1} , 1460 cm^{-1} respectively. The ^1NMR analysis detected the chemical shifts at 1.196 ppm, 5.167 ppm, between 2.36 - 2.54 ppm which recognizes the methyl, methylene, and methyne groups in the chemical structure of PHB respectively while in case of *B. thuringiensis*, ^1NMR spectra of PHB identified $-\text{CH}_3$, $-\text{CH}$, $-\text{CH}_2$ groups through chemical shifts observed at 1.28 ppm, 5.25 ppm, between 2.44-2.63 ppm. The XRD analysis characterized the crystal structure of PHB. The peak observed at $2\theta = 13.42^\circ$ and 16.96° in XRD analysis of PHB accumulated by *C. necator* peaks characterizes PHB crystal as orthorhombic unit cell structure whereas XRD peaks observed at $2\theta = 21.42^\circ$ and 22.52° corresponds to the α -helical crystal structure while remaining three peaks observed at $2\theta = 25.56^\circ$, 27.22° , and 30.48° corresponds to the partial crystalline structure of PHB. Similarly, peaks observed at $2\theta = 13.48^\circ$, $2\theta = 16.98^\circ$, $2\theta = 21.68^\circ$ and $2\theta = 22.50^\circ$ in XRD analysis of PHB accumulated by *B. thuringiensis* characterizes PHB crystal as similar as it was in case of *C. necator*. Although PHB produced by *B. thuringiensis* has a high percentage of crystallinity and a low level of tensile strength yet it could be utilized for various medical applications such as biodegradable sutures, stents, grafts, etc. after blending it with plasticizers. The thermal characterization of PHB produced by *C. necator* indicated that T_m and T_d values have a wide-ranging temperature gap which features easier thermal processibility of PHB for various applications such as packaging of fruits and vegetables, coating of fertilizers, etc.

सार

PHB, पारंपरिक प्लास्टिक के विकल्प के रूप में एक बायोप्लास्टिक का पता लगाया गया क्योंकि इसमें पॉलीप्रोपाइलीन के समान भौतिक गुण हैं। इसके अतिरिक्त, इसके गुणों जैसे पूर्ण बायोडिग्रेडेबिलिटी, बायोकम्पैटिबिलिटी, पानी की बूंदों और ऑक्सीजन के लिए अवरोध ने इसे विभिन्न सामाजिक अनुप्रयोगों के लिए एक उपयोगी बायोपॉलिमर बना दिया। विभिन्न साहित्य और वर्तमान अध्ययनों द्वारा यह स्पष्ट किया गया था कि इस जैव-प्लास्टिक को ग्राम-नकारात्मक और ग्राम-पॉजिटिव दोनों प्रकार के उपभेदों से उत्पादित किया जा सकता है।

वर्तमान जांच का प्राथमिक उद्देश्य प्रयोगशाला पैमाने बायोरिएक्टर (7 L) पर विभिन्न बैक्टीरियल उपभेदों (ए. ऑस्ट्रालिका, सी. निकटोर, बी. थुरिंगिएन्सिस) के हमारे मौजूदा लीड के हस्तांतरण के लिए एक सफल स्केल-अप प्रोटोकॉल स्थापित करना था। पायलट-स्केल बायोरिएक्टर (300 L) बैच और फेड-बैच कल्टीवेशन की स्थिति में एक सफल स्केल-अप प्रोटोकॉल स्थापित करने के लिए, शुरू में छोटे और बड़े पैमाने के बायोरिएक्टरों के बीच ज्यामितीय समानता की जांच की गई थी, जिसमें यह मूल्यांकन किया गया था कि दो बायोरिएक्टर कल्टीवेशन प्रणालियों की भौतिक सीमाएं समान हैं और एक दूसरे के ज्यामितीय अनुपात में हैं। इसके बाद, बायोरिएक्टर प्रणालियों की गतिशील समानता, मॉडल (छोटे) और प्रोटोटाइप (बड़े रिएक्टर) में गहन मापदंडों (पी / वी, केएलए, टीएम, एनआरई, क्यू / वी) को प्रभावित करने वाले प्रवाह के सापेक्ष मूल्य की तुलना करके सुनिश्चित की गई थी। दोनों (छोटे और बड़े बायोरिएक्टर) में गहन मापदंडों में से एक को स्थिर रखते हुए और स्केल-अप मापदंडों के सापेक्ष अनुपात (पैरामीट्रिक इंडेक्स) के माध्यम से बाकी पैमाने के मापदंडों पर इसके प्रभाव का मूल्यांकन करते हैं। कांस्टेंट पी / वी स्केल-अप मानदंड, हमेशा के लिए, सभी छोटे पैमाने के बायोरिएक्टर खेती के, 70/300 L बायोरिएक्टर कल्टीवेशन में परिणामों के सफल हस्तांतरण के लिए सबसे उपयुक्त मानदंड के रूप में उभरा।

ए. ऑस्ट्रालिका, सी. नेक्टर और बी. थुरिंगिएन्सिस की बैच खेती 7 लीटर बायोरिएक्टर में क्रमशः 33 घंटे, 54 घंटे और 36 घंटे तक की गई। बैच की खेती के अंत में 7 लीटर बायोरिएक्टर में ए. ऑस्ट्रालिका, सी. नेक्टर और बी. थुरिंगिएन्सिस के अधिकतम बायोमास को क्रमशः 8.66 ग्राम / लीटर, 12.46 ग्राम / लीटर, और 7.29 ग्राम / लीटर चित्रित किया गया, जबकि संचित पीएचबी क्रमशः 6.53 ग्राम / लीटर, 8.61 ग्राम / लीटर, 3.69 ग्राम / लीटर थी। ए. ऑस्ट्रालिका, सी. नेक्टर और बी. थुरिंगिएन्सिस की अधिकतम उत्पादकता क्रमशः 0.197 ग्राम/लीटर/घंटा, 0.159 ग्राम/लीटर/घंटा, और 0.102 ग्राम/लीटर/घंटा थी, जबकि पी एच बी यील्ड क्रमशः 0.285 ग्राम/ग्राम, 0.261 ग्राम/ग्राम, और 0.548 ग्राम/ग्राम थी। पी / वी स्केल-अप मानदंड का उपयोग करके 300 लीटर बैच बायोरिएक्टर खेती तक इन परिणामों की नकल करना संभव था। आगे 15 लीटर और 70 लीटर बायोरिएक्टर की खेती के लिए चयनित स्केल-अप मानदंड द्वारा परिणामों के सफल हस्तांतरण को प्रदर्शित करने के लिए 15 और 70 लीटर बायोरिएक्टर की खेती के चयनित स्केल-अप मानदंड द्वारा परिणामों के सफल

हस्तांतरण को प्रदर्शित करने के लिए, मॉडल-आधारित फेड-बैच खेती (7 लीटर बायोरिएक्टर), लगातार फेड-बैच के साथ ए. ऑस्ट्रालिका (गहलावत और श्रीवास्तव, 2013), सी. नेकेटर (शर्मा एट अल., 2015) और बी. थुरिंगिएन्सिस (वर्मा एट अल., 2019) के साथ स्यूडोस्टीडिस्टेट फीडिंग दर रणनीति का चयन किया गया था। इस प्रयोजन के लिए, फेड-बैच की खेती के दौरान संबंधित बदले हुए फीडिंग दरों को फिर से पहचानने के लिए गणितीय मॉडल को बदले हुए संस्करणों (15 और 70 एल के लिए) के साथ कंप्यूटर पर फिर से सिमुलेट किया गया था। फेड-बैच की खेती तब प्रायोगिक रूप से 15 & / या 70 लीटर बायोरिएक्टर में लागू की गई थी, जिसमें सांद्रता, पैदावार और उत्पादकता के मामले में 7 लीटर फेड बैच खेती के लीड की नकल करना संभव था। उत्पादित इंटरसेल्युलर पीएचबी निकालने के लिए, सोडियम डोडेसिल सल्फेट और सोडियम हाइपोक्लोराइट के साथ बायोमास के रासायनिक पाचन को क्लोरोफॉर्म (हान एट अल., १९९४) का उपयोग करके विलायक निष्कर्षण विधि द्वारा किया गया। इसमें *सी. नेकेटर* और *बी. थुरिंगिएन्सिस* के बायोमास से क्रमशः 69.5% और 40.57% अधिकतम पीएचबी रिकवरी पाई गई। *सी. नेकेटर* बायोमास से रिकवर्ड पीएचबी के जीपीसी विश्लेषण में वजन औसत आणविक भार (Mw), संख्या औसत आणविक भार (Mn), और और पॉलीडिसपेरिटी इंडेक्स को क्रमशः 115 kDa, 36 kDa, और 3.19 दर्शाया गया, जबकि बी। थुरिंगिएन्सिस के इन निष्कर्षों में ये क्रमशः 124 केडीए, 48.1 केडीए, और 2.58 थे। *सी. नेकेटर* बायोमास से रिकवर्ड पीएचबी के टीजीए विश्लेषण से संकेत मिलता है कि पीएचबी के कुल द्रव्यमान का 5 %, 85 % और 100 % क्रमशः 225 °C, 290 °C, और 500 °C पर थर्मल डिग्रेशन किया गया था।, जबकि B. थुरिंगिएन्सिस के इन निष्कर्षों में पीएचबी के कुल द्रव्यमान का 5%, और 95% क्रमशः 239 ° C और 276 ° C पर थर्मल डिग्रेशन किया गया था। *सी. नेकेटर* के बायोमास से बरामद PHB के एफटीआईआर स्पेक्ट्रा ने कार्यात्मक समूह कार्बोनिल , मिथाइल (स्ट्रेचिंग मोड), मिथाइल (झुकने मोड) की पहचान क्रमशः 1720 सेमी⁻¹, 1380 सेमी⁻¹, 14.5 सेमी⁻¹ से की। जबकि, बी. थुरिंगिएन्सिस के इन कार्यात्मक समूहों की पहचान क्रमशः 1720 सेमी⁻¹, 1380 सेमी⁻¹, 1460 सेमी⁻¹ से हुई। ¹NMR विश्लेषण ने 1.366 पीपीएम, 5.167 पीपीएम, 2.36 - 2.54 पीपीएम के बीच रासायनिक बदलावों का पता लगाया, जो PHB की रासायनिक संरचना में मिथाइल, मिथाइलीन और मेथेनी समूहों को पहचानता है , जबकि B. थुरिंगिएन्सिस, ¹NMR स्पेक्ट्रा PHB में -CH₃ -CH-, -CH₂ समूहों को रासायनिक पाली के माध्यम से 1.28 पीपीएम, 5.25 पीपीएम, 2.44-2.63 पीपीएम की पहचान करता है। XRD चोटियाँ 2θ = 13.42° और 16.96° पीएचबी क्रिस्टल के रूप में ऑर्थोरोम्बिक इकाई सेल के रूप में देखा जाता है। जबकि 2θ = 21.42° और 22.52° पर देखी गई एक्सआरडी चोटियाँ α-हेलिकल क्रिस्टल स्ट्रक्चर से मेल खाती हैं, जबकि शेष तीन चोटियाँ 2θ = 25.5°, 27.22° और 30.48° पीएचबी के आंशिक क्रिस्टलीय संरचना से मेल खाती हैं। इसी तरह, बी. थुरिंगिएन्सिस द्वारा निर्मित PHB के एक्सआरडी विश्लेषण में 2θ = 13.48 °, 2 16 = 16.98 °, 2θ = 21.68 ° और 28 = 22.50 ° पर देखी गई चोटियां PHB क्रिस्टल क्रिस्टल की वही विशेषता है, जैसा कि यह *सी. नेकेटर* में है । हालांकि बी. थुरिंगिएन्सिस द्वारा निर्मित पीएचबी में क्रिस्टलीयता का उच्च प्रतिशत और तन्य शक्ति का एक निम्न स्तर है, फिर भी इसे प्लास्टिसाइज़र के सम्मिश्रण के बाद, विभिन्न चिकित्सा अनुप्रयोगों जैसे कि बायोडिग्रेडेबल टांके, स्टेंट, ग्राफ्ट्स आदि के लिए उपयोग किया जा सकता है। *सी. नेकेटर* द्वारा निर्मित PHB के

ऊष्मीय लक्षण वर्णन ने संकेत दिया कि T_m और T_d मानों में एक व्यापक तापमान अंतर होता है जो विभिन्न अनुप्रयोगों जैसे फल और सब्जियों की पैकेजिंग, उर्वरकों के लेप, आदि के लिए पीएचबी की आसान तापीय प्रक्रिया को दर्शाता है।

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures	xx
List of Tables	xxv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xxx
SYMBELS	xxxii
Chapter 1.....	1
<i>Introduction and Objectives</i>	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Objectives	4
Chapter 2.....	5
<i>Literature Review</i>	5
2.1. Polyhydroxyalkanoates (PHAs)	5
2.2. Poly 3-hydroxybutyrate (PHB)	6
2.3 Comparison of PHAs with synthetic polymer	7
2.4. Bacterial PHB accumulation: a critical analysis	8
2.4.1 <i>Azohydromas australica</i>	9
2.4.2 <i>Cupriavidus necator</i>	11
2.4.3 <i>Bacillus thuringiensis</i>	14
2.5 Biosynthetic pathway of PHB	16
2.6 Scale-up of bacterial cultivations	18
2.7 Recovery of PHB	21
2.8 Characterization of PHB.....	28
2.8.1 Physiochemical properties of PHB	28
2.8.2 Thermal characterization of PHB	31
2.8.3 Mechanical characterization.....	33
2.9 Applications of PHB.....	34
2.9.1 PHB and its composites in the medical field.....	34
2.9.2 PHB and its composites in Agriculture	35
2.9.3 PHB and its composites in sustainable packaging.....	35
2.9.4 Non-conventional application of PHB and its composites	36
Chapter 3.....	37

<i>Materials and Methods</i>	37
3.1 Major types of equipment	37
3.2 Chemicals and reagents	39
3.3 Microorganism and maintenance	39
3.4 Medium composition	39
3.4.1 Production medium of <i>Azohydromonas australica</i> for shake flask and bioreactor	39
3.4.2 Production medium of <i>Cupriavidus necator</i> for shake flask and bioreactor	40
3.4.3 Production medium of <i>Bacillus thuringiensis</i> for shake flask and bioreactor	40
3.5 Experimental methods	40
3.5.1 Inoculum development.....	40
3.5.2 Batch cultivation studies	41
3.5.2.1 Shake flask studies	41
3.5.2.2 Batch cultivation in 7 L Bioreactor	41
3.5.2.3 Batch cultivation in 15 L Bioreactor with constant P/V as scale-up criteria	42
3.5.2.4 Batch cultivation in 70 L Bioreactor with constant P/V as scale-up criteria	42
3.5.2.5 Batch cultivation in 300 L Bioreactor with constant P/V as scale-up criteria	43
3.5.3 Model-based fed-batch cultivation of <i>Azohydromonas australica</i> , <i>Cupriavidus necator</i> and <i>Bacillus thuringiensis</i>	44
3.5.3.1 Fed-batch cultivation of <i>A. australica</i> , <i>C. necator</i> , and <i>B. thuringiensis</i> in 15 L bioreactor	47
3.5.3.2 Fed-batch cultivation of <i>A. australica</i> , <i>C. necator</i> , and <i>B. thuringiensis</i> in 70 L bioreactor	49
3.6 Scale-up methodology for PHB production	52
3.7 Analytical methods	54
3.7.1 Analysis of biomass	54
3.7.2 Estimation of sucrose	54
3.7.3 Estimation of glycerol and glucose	55
3.7.4 Estimation of TKN	55
3.7.5 Estimation of PHB	56
3.8 Extraction of PHB	57
3.8.1 Pre-treatment of biomass.....	57
3.8.2 Soxhlet extraction.....	57
3.8.3 Rotary vacuum evaporator	59

3.9 Characterization of PHB.....	59
3.9.1 Physical characterization of PHB	60
3.9.1.1 Gel Permeation Chromatography (GPC).....	60
3.9.1.2 Fourier transforms infrared spectroscopy (FT-IR)	60
3.9.1.3 Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR)	60
3.9.1.4 X-Ray Diffraction (XRD) analysis	61
3.9.2.2 Thermo Gravimetric analysis (TGA)	62
Chapter 4.....	63
<i>Scale-Up Strategy and Calculations.....</i>	<i>63</i>
4.1 Definition & fundamentals of scale-up	63
4.1.1 Geometrical similarity	63
4.1.2 Hydrodynamic similarity	65
4.2 General scale-up procedure (From 7 L to 15 L bioreactor	67
4.3 Scale-up studies from 7 L bioreactor to 15 L bioreactor	68
4.3.1 Geometrical similarity between 7 L and 15 L bioreactors	68
4.3.2 Calculation of Correction Factor (Fc) between 7 L and 15 L bioreactor	68
4.3.3 Hydrodynamic similarity between 7 L and 15 L bioreactor	69
4.3.3.1 Calculation of scale-up parameters for 7 L bioreactor:	70
4.3.3.1.1 Airflow rate (Q)	70
4.3.3.1.2 Superficial gas velocity (Vs)	70
4.3.3.1.3 Hydrodynamic parameters of 7 L bioreactor	71
4.3.3.1.3.1 Reynolds's Number (N_{Re}).....	71
4.3.3.1.3.2 Impeller Tip Velocity (Ω)	71
4.3.3.1.3.3 Un-gassed Power (P_{ug}) and Gassed Power (P_g)	71
4.3.3.1.3.3.1 Un-gassed power (P_{ug})	72
4.3.3.1.3.3.2 Gassed power (P_g).....	72
4.3.3.1.3.4 Volumetric mass transfer coefficient (K_La).....	73
4.3.3.1.3.5 Blend Time ($\ddot{\Theta}$).....	73
4.3.3.2 Calculations of scale-up parameters for 15 L bioreactor	74
4.3.3.2.1 Airflow rate (Q)	74
4.3.3.2.2 Superficial gas velocity (V_s).....	74
4.3.3.2.3 Constant gassed power per unit volume (P_g/V) as a scale-up strategy	75

4.3.3.2.3.1 Un-gassed power requirement for 15 L bioreactor	75
4.3.3.2.3.2 Gassed power requirement per unit volume for the 15 L bioreactor	75
4.3.3.2.3.3 Agitation rate (N) for 15 L bioreactor	75
4.3.3.2.3.4 Calculation of other hydrodynamic parameters for 15 L bioreactor with constant P/V scale-up criteria	76
4.3.3.2.3.4.1 Impeller Tip Velocity	76
4.3.3.2.3.4.2 Reynold's Number (N_{Re})	76
4.3.3.2.3.4.3 Volumetric mass transfer coefficient (K_{La})	76
4.3.3.2.3.4.4 Blend time (Θ)	76
4.3.3.2.4 Constant volumetric mass transfer coefficient (K_{La}) as a scale-up strategy..	79
4.3.3.2.4.1 Trial 1: To maintain the volumetric mass transfer coefficient constant for 7 L and 15 L bioreactor	80
4.3.3.2.4.1.1 Un-gassed power (P_{ug})	80
4.3.3.2.4.1.2 Gassed power requirement per unit volume (P_g/V).....	80
4.3.3.2.4.1.3 Impeller Tip Velocity (Π).....	80
4.3.3.2.4.1.4 Reynold's Number (N_{Re}).....	81
4.3.3.2.4.1.5 Volumetric mass transfer coefficient (K_{La})	81
4.3.3.2.4.1.6 Blend time (Θ)	81
4.3.3.2.4.1 Trial 2: To maintain the volumetric mass transfer coefficient constant for 7 L and 15 L bioreactor	83
4.3.3.2.4.2.1 Calculation of un-gassed power (P_{ug}).....	83
4.3.3.2.4.2.2 Gassed power (P_g) requirement	83
4.3.3.2.4.2.3 Gassed power per unit volume (P_g/V) requirement.....	83
4.3.3.2.4.2.4 Impeller Tip Velocity (Π).....	84
4.3.3.2.4.2.5 Reynold's Number (N_{Re})	84
4.3.3.2.4.2.6 Volumetric mass transfer coefficient (K_{La})	84
4.3.3.2.4.2.7 Blend time (Θ)	84
4.3.3.2.5 Constant tip velocity test	85
4.3.3.2.5.1 Un-gassed power (P_{ug}) requirement	86
4.3.3.2.5.2 Gassed power (P_g) requirement	86
4.3.3.2.5.3 Gassed power per unit volume (P_g/V) requirement	87
4.3.3.2.5.4 Impeller Tip Velocity (Π)	87
4.3.3.2.5.5 Reynold's Number (N_{Re})	87

4.3.3.2.5.6 Volumetric mass transfer coefficient (K_{La}).....	87
4.3.3.2.5.7 Blend time (Θ).....	87
4.3.3.2.6 Constant Reynolds number (N_{Re}) as a scale-up strategy	89
4.3.3.2.6.1 Un-gassed power (P_{ug}) requirement	89
4.3.3.2.6.2 Gassed power (P_g) requirement	90
4.3.3.2.6.3 Gassed power per unit volume (P_g/V).....	90
4.3.3.2.6.4 Impeller Tip Velocity	90
4.3.3.2.6.5 Reynold's Number (N_{Re})	90
4.3.3.2.6.6 Volumetric mass transfer coefficient (K_{La}).....	90
4.3.3.2.6.7 Blend time (Θ).....	90
4.3.3.2.7 Constant mixing time strategy as scale-up criteria	92
4.3.3.2.7.1 Un- gassed power requirement	92
4.3.3.2.7.2 Gassed power (P_g) requirement	93
4.3.3.2.7.3 Gassed power per unit volume (P_g/V).....	93
4.3.2.2.5.4 Impeller Tip Velocity:	93
4.3.3.2.7.5 Reynold's Number (N_{RE}).....	93
4.3.3.2.7.6 Volumetric mass transfer coefficient (K_{La}).....	93
4.3.3.2.7.7 Blend time (Θ).....	93
4.4 Scale-up calculation from 15 L to 300 L bioreactor	95
Chapter 5.....	97
<i>Results and discussion</i>	97
<i>for Biopolymer production by</i>	97
<i>Azohydromonas australica</i>	97
5.1 Cultivation studies of <i>Azohydromonas australica</i>	97
5.1.1 Shake flask cultivation studies	97
5.1.2 Batch cultivation studies of <i>A. australica</i> in stirred tank bioreactors using the statistically optimized medium.....	98
5.1.2.1 Batch cultivation studies in 7 L bioreactor	98
5.1.2.2 Scale-up of batch cultivation of <i>A. australica</i> using the statistically optimized medium	100
5.1.2.2.1 Scale-up of batch cultivation of <i>A. australica</i> from 7 L to 15 L bioreactor ..	100
5.1.2.2.2 Scale-up of batch cultivation of <i>A. australica</i> from 15 L to 70 L bioreactor using the statistically optimized medium	104

5.1.2.2.3 Scale-up of batch cultivation of <i>A. australica</i> from 70 L to 300 L bioreactor using a statistically optimized medium	108
5.1.3 Model-based Fed-batch scale-up studies of <i>A. australica</i> in stirred tank reactor using statistically optimized media	113
5.1.3.1 Fed-batch scale-up study of <i>A. australica</i> from 7 L to 15 L bioreactor cultivation	113
5.1.3.2 Fed-batch scale-up study of <i>A. australica</i> from 15 L to 70 L bioreactor cultivation	117
Chapter 6	123
<i>Results and discussions for biopolymer production by Cupriavidus necator and Characterization of Biopolymer produced</i>	123
6.1 Shake flask cultivation studies of <i>Cupriavidus necator</i>	123
6.2. Batch cultivation studies of <i>C. necator</i> in stirred tank bioreactor	124
6.2.1 Batch cultivation studies in 7 L bioreactor using statistically optimized media.....	124
6.2.2 Scale-up of batch cultivation of <i>C. necator</i> using the statistically optimized medium...	125
6.2.2.1 Scale-up of batch cultivation of <i>C. necator</i> from 7 L to 15 L bioreactor.....	126
6.2.2.2 Scale-up of batch cultivation of <i>C. necator</i> from 15 L to 70 L bioreactor	130
6.3 Model-based fed-batch cultivation studies of <i>C. necator</i> in stirred tank bioreactors	140
6.3.2 Fed-batch cultivation studies of <i>C. necator</i> in 70 L bioreactor	143
6.4 Recovery of PHB produced by <i>C. necator</i>	146
6.4.1 Recovery of Biomass from the harvested culture.....	146
6.4.2 Pre-treatment of biomass produced by <i>C. necator</i>	147
6.4.3 Extraction of PHB from pre-treated biomass of <i>C. necator</i>	148
6.5 Characterization of PHB recovered from dry cell weight of <i>C. necator</i>	149
6.5.1 Quantification of PHB by Gas Chromatography (GC)	150
6.5.2 Fourier Transforms Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR) of PHB sample recovered from biomass of <i>C. necator</i>	153
6.5.3 Nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) analysis of recovered PHB sample	155
6.5.4 X-Ray Diffraction (XRD) analysis of PHB recovered from <i>C. necator</i>	159
6.5.5 Thermogravimetric analysis (TGA) of PHB recovered from the biomass produced by <i>C. necator</i>	160
6.5.6 Differential scanning calorimetry (DSC) analysis for PHB recovered from the biomass of <i>C. necator</i>	162
6.5.7 Gel Permeation Chromatography (GPC) of the PHB recovered from the biomass of <i>C. necator</i>	164

Chapter7	167
<i>Results & discussions for biopolymer production by B. thuringiensis and Characterization of Biopolymer produced</i>	167
7.1 Shake flask studies of <i>Bacillus thuringiensis</i>	167
7.2 Batch cultivation studies of <i>Bacillus thuringiensis</i> in stirred tank bioreactor using statistically optimized media	168
7.2.1 Batch cultivation of <i>B. thuringiensis</i> in 7 L stirred tank bioreactor	168
7.2.2 Scale-up of batch cultivation of <i>B. thuringiensis</i> using the statistically optimized medium	170
7.2.2.1 Scale-up of batch cultivation of <i>B. thuringiensis</i> from 7 L to 15 L bioreactor	170
7.2.2.2 Scale-up of batch cultivation of <i>B. thuringiensis</i> from 15 L to 70 L bioreactor	173
7.2.2.3 Scale-up of batch cultivation of <i>B. thuringiensis</i> from 70 L to 300 L bioreactor	175
7.3 Model-based fed-batch cultivation studies of <i>B. thuringiensis</i> in stirred tank bioreactors using optimized production medium	178
7.3.1 Fed-batch cultivation of <i>B. thuringiensis</i> in 15 L bioreactor	178
7.3.2 Fed-batch cultivation of <i>B. thuringiensis</i> in 70 L bioreactor	181
7.4 Recovery of PHB produced by <i>Bacillus thuringiensis</i>	184
7.4.1 Recovery of biomass from the harvested culture	184
7.4.2 Pre-treatment of biomass produced by <i>B. thuringiensis</i>	184
7.4.3 Extraction of PHB from pre-treated biomass of <i>B. thuringiensis</i>	184
7.5 Characterization of PHB recovered from dry cell weight of <i>B. thuringiensis</i>	186
7.5.1 Quantification of PHB by gas chromatography (GC)	186
7.5.2 FT-IR spectroscopy of PHB recovered from the biomass of <i>B. thuringiensis</i>	188
7.5.3 Nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) analysis of recovered PHB sample	190
7.5.4 X-ray diffraction (XRD) analysis of PHB recovered from <i>B. thuringiensis</i>	192
7.5.5 Thermogravimetric analysis (TGA) of PHB produced by <i>B. thuringiensis</i>	194
7.5.6 Differential scanning calorimetry (DSC) analysis of PHB produced by <i>B. thuringiensis</i>	195
7.5.7 Gel Permeation Chromatography (GPC) analysis of the PHB produced by <i>B. thuringiensis</i>	197
8.1 Summary	200
8.2 Conclusions	206
8.3 Future outlook	215
References	216

Appendices 232

List of Figures

Title	Page No.
Fig. 2.1a: General structure of bacterial PHA	7
Fig. 2.1b: Basic structure of PHB	7
Fig. 2.2: TEM images of PHB granules in wild type <i>W. eutropha</i> at 2.5h (A), 5h (B), 9h (C), 24h (D)	7
Fig. 2.3: Biosynthetic pathway for PHB	17
Fig. 3.1: 300 L stirred tank reactor (Bioengineering AG, Switzerland)	44
Fig. 3.2: Experimental setup for fed-batch cultivation of <i>A. australica</i> in 15 L bioreactor	49
Fig. 3.3: Experimental setup for fed-batch cultivation of <i>A. australica</i> in 70 L bioreactor	51
Fig. 3.4: Rotary instrument setup for pre-treatment of biomass	58
Fig. 3.5: Soxhlet extraction unit	58
Fig. 3.6: Rotary vacuum evaporator set up	59
Fig. 4.1: Pictorial representation of 6 blade Rushton type impeller for stirred tank bioreactor	64
Fig. 4.2: Typical representation of a stirred tank bioreactor	64
Fig. 4.3 Relationship between Power Number & Reynolds's number	72
Fig. 4.4 Graphical representation of scale-up (7 L to 15 L bioreactor) parametric indices under constant P/V scale-up strategy	78
Fig. 4.5 Graphical representation of scale-up (7 L to 15 L bioreactor) parametric indices under constant $K_L a$ scale-up strategy for trial 1	82
Fig. 4.6 Graphical representation of scale-up (7 L to 15 L bioreactor) parametric indices under constant $K_L a$ scale-up strategy for trial 2	85
Fig. 4.7 Graphical representation of scale-up (7 L to 15 L bioreactor) parametric indices under constant tip velocity scale-up strategy	88

Fig. 4.8 Graphical representation of scale-up (7 L to 15 L bioreactor) parametric indices under constant Reynold's number scale-up strategy	92
Fig. 4.9 Graphical representation of scale-up (7 L to 15 L bioreactor) parametric indices under constant mixing time scale-up strategy	95
Fig. 4.10: Graphical observations of hydrodynamic similarities between 7 L and 15 L bioreactor through parametric indices	96
Fig. 5.1: Growth kinetics of <i>A. australica</i> in shake flasks studies	98
Fig. 5.2: Growth and production kinetics of <i>A. australica</i> in 7 L bioreactor	99
Fig. 5.3: Comparison of growth and production kinetics of <i>A. australica</i> in 15 L bioreactor	104
Fig. 5.4: Comparative analysis of batch growth and production kinetics of <i>A. australica</i> in 70 L and 15 L bioreactor	107
Fig. 5.5 Comparative analysis of batch growth and production kinetics of <i>A. australica</i> in 300 L and 70 L bioreactor	112
Fig. 5.6 Comparative analysis of batch growth and production kinetics of <i>A. australica</i> in 7 L, 15 L, 70 L, and 300 L	112
Fig. 5.7 Fed-batch growth and production kinetics of <i>A. australica</i> in a 15L bioreactor with a constant feed rate and constant P/V scale-up criteria	117
Fig. 5.8 Fed-batch growth and production kinetics of <i>A. australica</i> in a 70 L bioreactor with a constant feed rate	121
Fig. 6.1 Growth kinetics of <i>C. necator</i> in production media	124
Fig. 6.2 Growth and production kinetics of <i>C. necator</i> in 7 L bioreactor	125
Fig. 6.3 Comparison of growth and production kinetics of <i>C. necator</i> in a 7 L and 15 L bioreactor with constant P/V as scale-up criteria	128
Fig. 6.4 Comparison of batch kinetics process variables of <i>C. necator</i> in 15 L and 70 L bioreactor cultivation	132
Fig. 6.5 Comparison of process variables of batch cultivation of <i>C. necator</i> in a 70 L and 300 L bioreactor with constant P/V as scale-up criteria	137
Fig. 6.6 Fed-batch growth and production kinetics of <i>C. necator</i> in a 15 L bioreactor with pseudo-steady state feeding rate	143

Fig. 6.7 Comparison of fed-batch growth and production kinetics of <i>C. necator</i> in 15 L and 70 L bioreactor with pseudo-steady state feeding rate	146
Fig. 6.8 PHB film recovered through the extraction process from the biomass of <i>C. necator</i>	149
Fig. 6.9 Standard curve between PHB concentration and the ratio of PHB area & benzoic acid area.	151
Fig. 6.10 GC chromatogram of PHB sample made from the biomass obtained from <i>C. necator</i> before the extraction process	152
Fig. 6.11 GC chromatogram of PHB sample made from the biomass obtained from <i>C. necator</i> after the extraction process	153
Fig. 6.12 FT-IR spectra of standard PHB	154
Fig. 6.13 FT-IR spectra of PHB recovered from the biomass of <i>C. necator</i>	155
Fig. 6.14 ¹ H NMR spectra of standard PHB (purchased from Sigma Aldrich)	157
Fig. 6.15 ¹³ C NMR spectra of standard PHB (purchased from Sigma Aldrich)	157
Fig. 6.16 ¹ H NMR spectra of PHB obtained from <i>C. necator</i>	158
Fig. 6.17 ¹³ C NMR spectra of PHB obtained from <i>C. necator</i>	158
Fig. 6.18 XRD characterization of PHB recovered from the biomass produced by <i>C. necator</i>	160
Fig. 6.19 TGA profile of PHB recovered from the biomass of <i>C. necator</i>	162
Fig. 6.20 DSC heating and cooling profile of PHB recovered from the biomass of <i>C. necator</i>	164
Fig. 6.21 GPC chromatogram and a calibration curve of PHB recovered from the biomass obtained from <i>C. necator</i>	166
Fig. 7.1 Growth kinetics of <i>B. thuringiensis</i>	168
Fig. 7.2 Growth and production kinetics of <i>B. thuringiensis</i> in a 7 L bioreactor	169
Fig. 7.3 Comparison of growth and production kinetics of <i>B. thuringiensis</i> in a 7 L and 15 L bioreactor with constant P/V as scale-up criteria	172
Fig. 7.4 Comparison of growth and production kinetics of <i>B. thuringiensis</i> in 15	175

L and 70 L bioreactor with constant P/V as scale-up criteria	
Fig. 7.5 Comparison of growth and production kinetics of <i>B. thuringiensis</i> in 70 L and 300 L bioreactor with constant P/V as scale-up criteria	177
Fig. 7.6 Comparison of fed-batch growth and production kinetics of <i>B. thuringiensis</i> in 7 L Verma et al., 2019 and 15 L bioreactor with pseudo-steady state feeding rate	180
Fig. 7.7 Comparison of fed-batch growth and production kinetics of <i>B. thuringiensis</i> in 15 L and 70 L bioreactor with constant P/V scale-up	183
Fig. 7.8 PHB film recovered from the biomass of <i>B. thuringiensis</i>	185
Fig. 7.9 GC chromatogram of PHB sample made from the biomass obtained from <i>B. thuringiensis</i> before the extraction process	187
Fig. 7.10 GC chromatogram of PHB sample made from the biomass obtained from <i>B. thuringiensis</i> after the extraction process	188
Fig. 7.11 FT-IR spectra of PHB recovered from the biomass of <i>B. thuringiensis</i>	189
Fig. 7.12 ¹ H NMR spectra of PHB obtained from <i>B. thuringiensis</i>	191
Fig. 7.13 ¹³ C NMR spectra of PHB obtained from <i>B. thuringiensis</i>	191
Fig. 7.14 XRD analysis of PHB recovered from the biomass produced by <i>B. thuringiensis</i>	193
Fig. 7.15 TGA profile of PHB recovered from the biomass of <i>C. necator</i>	195
Fig. 7.16 DSC heating and cooling profiles of PHB produced by <i>B. thuringiensis</i>	196
Fig. 7.17 GPC chromatogram and a calibration curve of PHB recovered from the biomass obtained from <i>B. thuringiensis</i>	199
Fig. A.1 Graphical observation of scale-up (15 L to 70 L bioreactor) parametric indices under constant gassed power per unit volume scale-up strategy	238
Fig. A.2 Graphical observation of scale-up (15 L to 70 L bioreactor) parametric indices under constant K _L a scale-up strategy for trial 1	243
Fig. A.3 Graphical observation of scale-up (15 L to 70 L bioreactor) parametric indices under constant K _L a scale-up strategy for trial 2	247
Fig. A.4 Graphical observation of scale-up (15 L to 70 L bioreactor) parametric indices under constant tip velocity scale-up strategy	250

Fig. A.5 Graphical observation of scale-up (15 L to 70 L bioreactor) parametric indices under constant Reynolds's number scale-up strategy	254
Fig. A.6 Graphical observation of scale-up (15 L to 70 L bioreactor) parametric indices under constant mixing time scale-up strategy	257
Fig. A.7 Graphical observation of scale-up (70 L to 300 L bioreactor) parametric indices under constant gassed power per unit volume scale-up strategy	263
Fig. A.8 Graphical observation of scale-up (70 L to 300 L bioreactor) parametric indices under constant K_{La} scale-up strategy for trial 1	268
Fig. A.9 Graphical observation of scale-up (70 L to 300 L bioreactor) parametric indices under constant K_{La} scale-up strategy for trial 2	271
Fig. A.10 Graphical observation of scale-up (70 L to 300 L bioreactor) parametric indices under constant tip velocity scale-up strategy	275
Fig. A.11 Graphical observation of scale-up (70 L to 300 L bioreactor) parametric indices under constant Reynolds's number scale-up strategy	279
Fig. A.12 Graphical observation of scale-up (70 L to 300 L bioreactor) parametric indices under constant mixing time scale-up strategy	282

List of Tables

Title	Page No.
Table 2.1 Name of common PHAs based on alkyl group present at the β position	5
Table 2.2 Comparison of physical properties between biodegradable and synthetic polymer	8
Table 2.3 Comparison of Polyhydroxyalkanoates extraction methods	27
Table 2.4 Therapeutic applications of PHB and its composites	34
Table 2.5 Packaging applications of PHB and its composites	35
Table 2.6 Non-conventional applications of PHB and its composites	36
Table 3.1 Lists of major types of equipment	37
Table 4.1 Comparison of linear dimensions of the bioreactor between 7 L and 15 L bioreactor	68
Table 4.2 Geometrical similarity between 7 L and 15 L bioreactor	68
Table 4.3 Operating parameters of 7 L bioreactor	70
Table 4.4 Final values of intensive parameters for 7 L bioreactor	74
Table 4.5 Final values of hydrodynamic parameters for 15 L bioreactor using constant P/V as scale-up criteria	77
Table 4.6 Comparison of scale-up parameters between 7 L and 15 L bioreactor using constant P/V as scale-up criteria	77
Table 4.7 Final values of hydrodynamic parameters for 15 L bioreactor using constant KLa as scale-up criteria for trial 1	81
Table 4.8 Comparison of scale-up parameters between 7 L and 15 L bioreactor using constant KLa as scale-up criteria for trail 1	82
Table 4.9 Final values of hydrodynamic parameters for 15 L bioreactor using constant KLa as scale-up criteria for trial 2	84
Table 4.10 Comparison of scale-up parameters between 7L and 15L bioreactor using constant KLa as scale-up criteria for trial 2	85

Table 4.11 Final values of hydrodynamic parameters for 15 L bioreactor using constant tip velocity as scale-up criteria	88
Table 4.12 Comparison of scale-up parameters between 7 L and 15 L bioreactor using constant tip velocity as scale-up criteria	88
Table 4.13 Final values of hydrodynamic parameters for 15 L bioreactor using constant Reynolds's number as scale-up criteria	91
Table 4.14 Comparison of scale-up parameters between 7 L and 15 L bioreactor using constant Reynold's number as scale-up criteria	91
Table 4.15 Final values of hydrodynamic parameters for 15 L bioreactor using constant mixing time as scale-up criteria	94
Table 4.16 Comparison of scale-up parameters between 7 L and 15 L bioreactor using constant mixing time as scale-up criteria	94
Table 5.1 Comparison of concentration, yield, and productivity data obtained from batch bioreactor cultivations in 7 L and 15 L along with results reported by Gahlawat & Srivastava, 2012, and Kumar & Srivastava, 2014.	103
Table 5.2 Comparison of concentration, yield and productivity values obtained for batch cultivations in 7 L, 15 L, 70 L, and 300 L bioreactor	111
Table 5.3 Comparison of concentration, yield and productivity data obtained from fed-batch bioreactor cultivations in 7 L (Gahlawat & Srivastava, 2013), 15 L, and 70 L STR	122
Table 6.1 Comparison of various scale-up criteria for scale-up from 7 L to 15 L bioreactor cultivation	128
Table 6.2 Identification of appropriate scale-up criteria for transfer of results from 15 L to 70 L bioreactor cultivation	133
Table 6.3: Identification of appropriate scale-up criteria for transfer of results from 70 L to 300 L bioreactor cultivation	138
Table 6.4 Comparison of concentration, yield, and productivity data obtained from batch cultivation of <i>C. necator</i> in 7 L, 15 L, 70 L, 300 L bioreactor.	140
Table 6.5 Comparison of concentration of different process variables, and productivity data obtained from fed-batch bioreactor cultivations in 7 L (Sharma et al., 2015), 15 L and 70 L (present study)	145
Table 6.6: Summary of the results obtained in various stages of <i>C. necator</i>	147

biomass recovery	
Table 6.7 Comparison of FTIR results of recovered PHB and standard PHB	155
Table 6.8 Comparison of chemical shift in PHB shown through ¹ H NMR results	159
Table 6.9 Comparison of chemical shift in PHB shown through ¹³ C NMR results	159
Table 6.10 Comparison of XRD analysis of PHB synthesized by <i>C. necator</i> with the results reported in the literature	160
Table 6.11 Comparison of Thermal degradation results of PHB through TGA analysis	161
Table 6.12 Comparison of DSC results with previous studies	164
Table 6.13 Comparison of GPC results of PHB	165
Table 6.14 Comparison of weight average molecular weight of PHB recovered from <i>C. necator</i> and <i>B. thuringiensis</i> biomass at different scales of bioreactor cultivation	166
Table 7.1 Comparison of concentration, yield, and productivity data obtained from batch cultivation of <i>B. thuringiensis</i> in 7 L, 15 L, 70 L, and 300 L bioreactor.	178
Table 7.2 Comparison of concentration, yield, and productivity data obtained from fed-batch bioreactor cultivations in 7 L (Verma et al., 2019), 15 L and 70 L (present study)	183
Table 7.3 Summary of the results obtained in various stages of <i>B. thuringiensis</i> biomass recovery	185
Table 7.4 Comparison of FTIR results of PHB with previous studies	189
Table 7.5 Comparison of chemical shift in PHB shown through ¹ H NMR results	192
Table 7.6 Comparison of chemical shift in PHB shown through ¹³ C NMR results	192
Table 7.7 Comparison of XRD analysis of PHB synthesized by <i>B. thuringiensis</i> with the results reported in the literature	193
Table 7.8 Comparison of Thermal degradation results of PHB through TGA analysis	195
Table 7.9 Comparison of DSC results with previous studies	197

Table 7.10 Comparison of GPC results of PHB with previous studies	198
Table A.1 Comparison of various linear dimensions between 15 L bioreactor and 70 L bioreactor	233
Table A.2 Comparison of various ratios of linear dimensions between 15 L and 70 L bioreactors.	233
Table A.3 Final values of hydrodynamic parameters for 70 L bioreactor using constant gassed power per unit volume as scale-up criteria	238
Table A.4 Comparison of scale-up parameters between 15 L and 70 L bioreactor using constant P/V as scale-up criteria	238
Table A.5 Final values of hydrodynamic parameters for 70 L bioreactor using constant KLa as scale-up criteria for trial 1	243
Table A.6 Comparison of scale-up parameters between 15 L and 70 L bioreactor using constant KLa as scale-up criteria for trial 1	243
Table A.7 Final values of hydrodynamic parameters for 70 L bioreactor using constant KLa as scale-up criteria for trial 2	246
Table A.8 Comparison of scale-up parameters between 15 L and 70 L bioreactor using constant KLa as scale-up criteria for trial 2	246
Table A.9 Final values of hydrodynamic parameters for 70 L bioreactor using constant impeller tip velocity as scale-up criteria	250
Table A.10 Comparison of scale-up parameters between 15 L and 70 L bioreactor using constant impeller tip velocity as scale-up criteria	250
Table A.11 Final values of hydrodynamic parameters for 70 L bioreactor using constant Reynolds's number as scale-up criteria	253
Table A.12 Comparison of scale-up parameters between 15 L and 70 L bioreactor using constant Reynolds's number as scale-up criteria	253
Table A.13 Final values of hydrodynamic parameters for 70 L bioreactor using constant mixing time as scale-up criteria	256
Table A.14 Comparison of scale-up parameters between 15 L and 70 L bioreactor using constant mixing time as scale-up criteria	257
Table A.15 Comparison of various dimensions between 70 L bioreactor and 300 L bioreactor	258

Table A.16 Comparison of various ratios of linear dimensions between 15L and 70L bioreactor	258
Table A.17 Final values of hydrodynamic parameters for 300 L bioreactor using constant power per unit volume as scale-up criteria	262
Table A.18 Comparison of scale-up parameters between 70 L and 300 L bioreactor using constant P/V as scale-up criteria	262
Table A.19 Final values of hydrodynamic parameters for 300 L bioreactor using constant KLa as scale-up criteria for trial 1	267
Table A.20 Comparison of scale-up parameters between 70L and 300L bioreactor using constant KLa as scale-up criteria for trial 1	267
Table A.21 Final values of hydrodynamic parameters for 300 L bioreactor using constant KLa as scale-up criteria for trial 2	271
Table A.22 Comparison of scale-up parameters between 70 L and 300 L bioreactor using constant KLa as scale-up criteria for trial 2	271
Table A.23 Final values of hydrodynamic parameters for 300 L bioreactor using constant tip velocity as probable scale-up criteria	275
Table A.24 Comparison of scale-up parameters between 70 L and 300 L bioreactor using constant tip velocity as scale-up criteria	275
Table A.25 Final values of hydrodynamic parameters for 300 L bioreactor using constant Reynolds's number as scale-up criteria	278
Table A.26 Comparison of scale-up parameters between 70 L and 300 L bioreactor using constant Reynolds's number as scale-up criteria	279
Table A.27 Final values of hydrodynamic parameters for 300 L bioreactor using constant mixing time as scale-up criteria	282
Table A.28 Comparison of scale-up parameters between 70 L and 300 L bioreactor using constant mixing time as scale-up criteria	282

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

3HB	3-hydroxybutyrate
3HV	3-hydroxyvalerate
4HB	4-hydroxybutyrate
ATCC	American Type Culture Collection
ATR	Attenuated total reflectance
CoA	Coenzyme A
CMC	Carboxy Methyl Cellulose
DCW	Dry Cell Weight
DNS	Dinitrosalicylic acid
DO	Dissolved Oxygen
DSC	Differential scanning calorimetry
DSM	Deutsche Sammlung von Mikroorganismen
EDTA	Ethylene diamine tetra acetic acid
FTIR	Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy
GPC	Gel permeation chromatography
GPa	Giga Pascal
Gr –NPs	Graphene-nanoparticles
HPLC	High Performance Liquid Chromatography
HDPE	High-Density poly(ethylene)
LDPE	Low-Density poly(ethylene)
MCL	Medium Chain Length
MPa	Mega Pascal
NADPH	Nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide phosphate
NMR	Nuclear Magnetic Resonance
NPCM	Non-polymer cellular material
PHA	Poly(3-hydroxyalkanoates)
P3HB/PHB	Poly(3-hydroxybutyrate)
P4HB	Poly(4-hydroxybutyrate)
PHH	Poly(3-hydroxyhexanoate)

PHO	Poly(3-hydroxyoctanoate)
PHP	Poly(hydroxypropionate)
PHV	Poly(3-hydroxyvalerate)
PHBHHx	Poly(3-hydroxybutyrate-co-3-hydroxyhexanoate)
PLA	Poly(lactic acid)
PP	Poly(propylene)
PSS	Pseudosteady state
SCL	Short Chain Length
SDS	Sodium Dodecyl Sulfate
TEM	Transmission Electron Microscope
TES	Trace Element Solution
TKN	Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen
TGA	Thermogravimetric analysis
UV	Ultra-Violet
XRD	X-Ray Diffraction

SYMBOLS

D	Dilution rate (h^{-1})
D_T	Diameter of Tank (cm)
D_i	Diameter of Impeller (cm)
F_c	Correction factor
H_T	Height of Tank (cm)
$K_{L,a}$	Volumetric Mass Transfer Coefficient (h^{-1})
L	Liter
μ	Viscosity of the medium (Kg/cm-s)
μ_m	Maximum specific growth rate (h^{-1})
M_n	Number average molecular weight (kDa)
M_w	Weight average molecular weight (kDa)
M_z	Z average molecular weight (kDa)
M_w/M_n	Polydispersity index
N	Impeller rotation speed (rpm)
N_{Re}	Reynold's Number
P	PHB concentration (g/L)
P_{ug}	Un-gassed power (W)
P_g	Gassed power (W)
P/V	Power per unit Volume (W/m^3)
Π	Impeller Tip Velocity (m/s)
Q	Airflow rate (Lpm)
Q/V	Volumetric airflow rate (Lpm)
ρ	Medium density (kg/m^3)
T_c	Crystalline Temperature ($^{\circ}\text{C}$)

T_g	Glass transition Temperature ($^{\circ}\text{C}$)
T_d	Thermal degradation Temperature ($^{\circ}\text{C}$)
T_m	Melting Temperature ($^{\circ}\text{C}$)
t_m	Mixing time
$\bar{\Theta}$	Blend Time
V	Working volume of the bioreactor (L)
dV/dt	Rate of change of volume (L/h)
V_s	Superficial Gas Velocity (m/s)
v/v	volume/volume
w/v	weight by volume
X_c	Degree of crystallinity