

Research Paper

**PHOSPHATE SOLUBILIZING BACTERIA ASSOCIATED WITH
NODULES OF ARHAR (*CAJANUS CAJAN L.*) AND LATHYRUS
(*LATHYRUS SATIVUS L.*) AND THEIR TRICALCIUM
PHOSPHATE SOLUBILIZING ABILITIES**

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ABSTRACT

Phosphorus is a minor nutrient and known for its vital role in crop plants. Its lower use efficiency makes it costlier input for farmer and enhanced the production cost. In this context, eight endophytic bacteria were isolated from the root nodules and rhizospheric soil of various plants grown at 4 locations in Bihar, India and were screened for their *in vitro* insoluble phosphorous (P) solubilization activity. were Based on the amplification, sequencing, and phylogenetic analysis of 16S rRNA gene, the most potential P-solubilizing bacterial isolate was identified as *Bacillus aryabhatai* BAUMS8, followed by *Klebsiella pneumoniae* MBAU4. Plant growth-promoting potential of two selected bacteria was analyzed *in-vitro* and these were found to produce optimum quantities of indole acetic acid, gibberellic acid as well as P-solubilization abilities. The isolates PSB5 and PSB3 were solubilized (mg/L) maximum phosphate (4.542 and 4.472, respectively) followed by PSB8 (4.378), PSB1 (4.132), PSB4 (4.074), PSB7 (3.965), PSB6 (3.818), PSB2 (3.802). This study demonstrates that nodules are important resources for searching the endophytic bacteria possessing insoluble P-solubilization as well as other PGPR properties, to mitigate the phosphorous deficiency in the soils and improve crop production.

KEYWORDS: *Bacillus* sp., *Klebsiella* sp., Insoluble phosphorus, Solubilization

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that nodules of lathyrus could be used for bio prospecting of endophytic bacteria possessing insoluble P-solubilization as well as other PGPR properties, in order to mitigate the phosphorous deficiency in the soils and improve crop production and soil health. Plant growth-promoting potential of two selected bacteria, as *Klebsiella pneumoniae* MBAU4 and *Bacillus aryabhatai* BAUMS8 were analyzed *in-vitro* and these were found to produce, indole acetic acid, gibberellic acid and phosphate solubilization abilities. These properties were help to unlock the P mineralization kinetics in soil by mediating the rhizospheric environment. An array of bacteria was isolated from undisturbed soil, characterized, and studied for their P solubilization potential. Eight bacterial isolates were found to be promising (PSB4 - *Bacillus* sp. and PSB8 - *Klebsiella* sp.), of which, PSB5 (NCBI-MK850114 and MN533949) was found to be the most potent strain owing to its enhanced P solubilization capacity exhibited in both qualitative and quantitative assays. This was also reflected in the soil incubation study wherein PSB5 exhibited remarkably high P release rates. This was attributed to decreased pH owing to its high acid production capacity. From the study it can be recommended that these bacterial strains can be used for the preparation of phosphate solubilizing bacterial biofertilizers.

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