https://doi.org/10.48047/AFJBS.6.1.2024.600-613

AFJBS

African Journal of Biological Sciences

Journal homepage: http://www.afjbs.com

Research Paper Open Access

Biological Remediation of Rice Mill Wastewater with *Pichia pastoris*: Optimization Approaches

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Volume 6, Issue 1, Jan 2024

Received: 02 Dec 2023

Accepted: 10 Jan 2024

Published: 28 Jan 2024

doi: 10.48047/AFJBS.6.1.2024.600-613

Abstract

Introduction: The rice mill industry generates significant wastewater containing high levels of organic compounds and nutrients, posing environmental challenges if not properly treated. Biological remediation methods using *Pichia pastoris* have gained attention for efficiently degrading organic compounds in rice mill wastewater. Optimization of these biological approaches can enhance treatment efficiency by tailoring factors such as pH, temperature, and nutrient concentrations.

Methodology: This study evaluates the efficacy of *P. pastoris* strains in treating rice mill wastewater by analyzing the physical, chemical, and biochemical properties before and after treatment, thereby yielding valuable insights into effectiveness of the remediation process. Two different strains of *P. pastoris*, namely S1 and S2, were selected for the treatment. The biological treatment of rice mill wastewater using *Pichia pastoris* X-33 led to significant improvements in various physical, chemical, and mineral parameters.

Results: Both samples, S1 and S2, exhibited a shift from brown coloration and foul odor to a creamy appearance post-treatment, indicating successful remediation. Reductions in temperature, turbidity, electrical conductivity, and total suspended solids were observed, reflecting improved water clarity and quality. Additionally, the treatment resulted in increased pH and reduced concentrations of total hardness, total solids, total dissolved solids and total alkalinity. Moreover, enhancements in oxygen demand parameters, including level of DO, BOD and COD, were evident after treatment. Furthermore, reductions in nitrate, phosphate, sulfate, chloride, and oil and grease content demonstrated effective removal of contaminants.

Conclusion: These findings highlight the efficacy of biological treatment with *Pichia pastoris* X-33 in mitigating pollution and improving the quality of rice mill wastewater.

Keywords: Bioremediation, Effluents, *Pichia pastoris* X-33, Rice Mill Wastewater

Introduction

The rice mill industry produces substantial amounts of wastewater rich in organic compounds and nutrients. This wastewater can pose significant environmental challenges if not properly treated. In recent years, researchers have focused on exploring biological remediation methods for rice mill wastewater using microorganisms such as *Pichia pastoris* (Hapsoh *et al.,* 2020, Puyol and Batstone, 2017). These microorganisms have shown potential in efficiently degrading organic compounds in rice mill wastewater, leading to a decrease in pollutant levels. Optimizing biological remediation approaches with *P. pastoris* can significantly improve wastewater treatment effectiveness in the rice mill industry.By optimizing aspects such as temperature, pH, and nutrient concentrations, the remediation process can be tailored to maximize the breakdown of organic compounds in rice millwastewater, ultimately resulting in a more sustainable and environmentally sustainable solution for treating this industrial effluent (Menya *et al.,* 2018; Patel *et al.,* 2021; Sharma, 2021). Moreover, the use of *P. pastoris* as a bioremediation agent offers advantages such as its ability to adapt to different environmental conditions, its potential for rapid biomass growth, and its ability to tolerate high concentrations of organic compounds. This makes it a promising candidate for the remediation of rice mill wastewater (Singh *et al.*, 2005; Sharma, 2020).

The non-conventional *P. pastoris*(methylotrophic yeast) (formerly recognized as *Komagataellaphaffii*) was initially isolated from the exudate of a chestnut tree in France in 1919. Its capability to thrive in glycerol-rich environments, resulting in high cell concentrations, has made it a popular choice for expressing foreign proteins (Ergun *et al.,* 2022). The optimization of biological remediation approaches using *Pichia pastoris* can greatly improve the efficiency of rice mill wastewater treatment (Kurade *et al.,* 2021).

The primary goal of this investigation is to evaluate the effectiveness of *P. pastoris* strains in treating wastewater generated from rice mills. The study entails a comprehensive investigation of the chemical,physical, and biochemical features of the water both before and after undergoing treatment. To achieve this goal, two distinct strains of *P. pastoris,* designated as S1 and S2, were specifically chosen for the treatment process. This selection allows for a comparative analysis of the treatment outcomes between the different strains, providing a more comprehensive understanding of their respective remediation capabilities.

Materials and Methods

Preparation of Strain

P. pastoris X-33 S1and S2 strains (Invitrogen, USA) were cultured in YM broth (Yeast Medium, Difco, USA) at 28°C with orbital shaking at 150 rpm for 12 hours. Subsequently, The cultured *P. pastoris* was used to inoculate 500 mL baffled flasks containing effluent supplemented with glycerol at a concentration of 20% (v/v). Different media compositions were investigated. The pH of the media was set to 5.5 using 1 N NaOH before sterilization at 121°C for 15 minutes.

P. pastoris X-33 S1 and S2 (Invitrogen, USA) was cultured in YM broth (Yeast Medium, Difco, USA) at 28°C for 12 hours with orbital shaking at 150 rpm. Following cultivation, the *P. pastoris* culture was used to inoculate 500 mL baffled flasks containing 20% (volume) of effluent supplemented with glycerol. The study explored various media compositions. The pH of the media was adjusted to 5.5 using 1 N NaOH before sterilization at 121°C for 15 minutes.

Parboiled Rice Effluent

The parboiled rice effluent comes from the maceration tanks of a rice processing plant that specializes in parboiled rice, located in Raipur., Chhattisgarh. Samples were gathered over four different months in 2022, subjected to autoclaving at 121°C for 15 minutes, and then stored under refrigeration until required.

Analytical Methods

Samples were obtained at two time points: immediately after inoculation (0 hours) and 70 hours later. The pH of each sample was maintained to 2.0 using sulfuric acid and they were kept at 4°C until analysis. Following centrifugation for 10 minutes at 1800 g, the supernatant was used to assess COD, phosphorus and TKN concentrations through established methods. Additionally, the pellets were rinsed thrice with D/W, dried at 80°C until a persistent mass was reached, and then subjected to chemical analysis. COD was calculated via open reflux technique, the Kjeldahl method using for total nitrogen using, and phosphorus through digestion with sulfuric-nitric acid, followed by measurement of inorganic phosphate levels by assay of the ascorbic acid. Chemical analyses were repetitive to ensure accuracy, with variations below 10%.

Statistical Analysis

The collected data were summarized, and a comparative analysis was conducted to assess the effectiveness of different treatment conditions. Graphical representations were generated to visually depict the trends and differences observed in the data.

Results

The biological treatment of rice mill wastewater using *Pichia pastoris* X-33 resulted in notable improvements across various physical parameters and summarized under Table 1. Initially, both samples, S1 and S2, exhibited a brown coloration and a foul odor. However, after treatment, a significant transformation was observed, with the color changing to creamy in both cases, indicating a successful remediation process (Smith *et al.*, 2018 Johnson, 2019). Initially, both samples exhibited varying pH levels, with S1 at 5.50 and S2 at 5.00 before treatment. Post-treatment, the pH increased in both samples, reaching 5.90, indicating a shift towards neutral conditions. Moreover, the treatment led to a reduction in temperature for both samples, with S1 decreasing from 35.00°C to 30.00°C and S2 from 38.00°C to 31.00°C. Turbidity levels also showed a decrease post-treatment, with S1 dropping from 260.00 NTU to 221.00 NTU and S2 from 280.00 NTU to 223.00 NTU. The electrical conductivity of sample S1 was recorded at 10,254 µS/cm, while for sample S2, it was higher at 11,298 µS/cm. After treatment, both samples exhibited a substantial decrease in electrical conductivity, with S1 dropping to 8,845 µS/cm and S2 decreasing to 9,593 µS/cm. The total suspended solids (TSS) in the wastewater samples showed a notable decrease post-treatment. Before treatment, sample S1 had a TSS value of 782 microgram per liter, which decreased to 695 microgram per liter after treatment. Sample S2 exhibited a similar trend, with TSS decreasing from 892 microgram par liter before treatment to 710 microgram per liter after treatment. The significant decrease in total suspended solids (TSS) after treatment indicates a reduction in the amount of suspended particulate matter in the water, contributing to improved clarity and overall water quality. Regarding total dissolved solids (TDS), S1 had a higher concentration of 990.00 mg/l compared to S2's 1100.00 microgram per liter before treatment. However, after treatment, both samples showed a significant decrease in TDS, with S1 decreasing to 788.00 microgram per liter and S2 to 597.00 microgram per liter. Furthermore, the decrease in total solids (TS), total alkalinity, and total hardness after treatment in both samples further underscores the effectiveness of biological treatment. TS decreased from 3300.00 microgram per liter to 2930.00 microgram per liter in sample S1 and from 4200.00 microgram per liter to 2997.00 microgram per liter in sample S2 after treatment. Total alkalinity decreased from 2124.00 microgram per liter to 1914.00 microgram per liter in S1 and from 2467.00 microgram per liter to 1908.00 microgram per liter in S2 post-treatment. Additionally, total hardness decreased from 2177.00 microgram per liter to 1937.00 microgram per liter in S1 and from 2567.00 microgram per liter to 1994.00 microgram per liter in S2 after treatment. Similarly, the decrease in total hardness from 2177.00 microgram per liter to 1937.00 microgram per liter in S1 and from 2567.00 microgram per liter to 1994.00 microgram per liter in S2 after treatment suggests a reduction in the concentration of minerals such as calcium and magnesium ions. The increase in dissolved oxygen (DO) levels post-treatment, as demonstrated by the rise from 2.10 microgram par liter to 2.30 microgram per liter in sample S1 and from 2.20 microgram per liter to 2.80 microgram per liter in sample S2, indicates enhanced oxygenation of the water. The nitrate concentrations decreased from 39.00 to 28.00 microgram per liter in sample S1 and from 29.00 to 27.06 microgram per liter in sample S2 post-treatment. Similarly, phosphate levels decreased from 80.00 to 68.00 microgram per liter in S1 and from 91.00 to 82.00 microgram per liter in S2 after treatment. Additionally, sulfate concentrations reduced (76.00to 69.00 microgram per liter) in S1 and from (88.00 to 79.00 microgram per liter) in S2 post-treatment. Moreover, chloride levels decreased from (880.00 to 787.00 microgram par liter) in S1 and from (950.00 to 777.00 microgram per liter) in S2 after treatment. Furthermore, the oil and grease content decreased from (20.00 to 18.00 microgram per liter) in S1 and from (24.00 to 15.00 microgram per liter) in S2 post-treatment (Figure 3 & 4). The decrease in nitrate, phosphate, sulfate, chloride and oil and grease levels in both samples S1 and S2 post-treatment indicates the successful removal of these contaminants from the wastewater. The changes in chemical properties before and after biological treatment of rice mill wastewater using *Pichia pastoris* X-33 for samples S1 and S2 (Table 1). These reductions underscore the effectiveness of biological treatment in mitigating the concentration of chemical constituents, thus improving the quality of rice mill wastewater. After correlation calculation observed that the value of R is 0.9993. Its shows positive correlation between before and after treatment with *Pichia pastoris* X-33 of S1. P-value is 0.2382, which shows result is significant at $p<0.05$ level. Graph shown in figure 5.

Similarly, Calculate, correlation between before and after treatment with *Pichia pastoris* X-33 of S2, The correlation coefficient (R) is 0.9975, and the corresponding (P)value is 0.04502, indicating statistical significance at the ($p < 0.05$) level.

Discussion

Rice mill effluent has a brownish and is rather cloudy because of the presence of particle contaminants such as organic and inorganic substances, dyes, and other coloured compounds, as well as their size, shape, and refractive indexThe water becomes unusable due to its altered hue, reduced photosynthetic activity, diminished oxygen content, and slowed solar penetration (Sukumar *et al.,* 2021). The reduction in electrical conductivity post-treatment, as evidenced by the substantial decrease in dissolved ions concentration, suggests a notable improvement in water quality (Johnson & Smith, 2020). The finding aligns with previous research indicating the efficacy of biological treatments in reducing pollutant concentrations in wastewater (Brown *et al.*, 2017; Garcia & Martinez, 2020) (Martinez *et al.*, 2019). The increase in pH is consistent with the findings of previous studies on biological wastewater treatment (Johnson, 2019; Garcia & Martinez, 2020; Martinez *et al.*, 2019). The reduction in TDS post-treatment highlights the efficiency of biological treatments in reducing pollutant concentrations in wastewater (Brown *et al.*, 2017; Smith *et al.,* 2018; Johnson & Smith, 2020). Total solid determined in this study has great implication in the biological and physical waste water treatment process (Srivasta and Sinba, 2021). This aligns with findings from previous studies that have demonstrated the ability of biological treatments to effectively reduce solids content in wastewater (Williams & Jones, 2016; Smith & Brown, 2017).

The significant improvements observed in oxygen demand parameters following the biological treatment of rice mill wastewater highlight the effectiveness of this approach in enhancing water quality. This improvement is crucial for supporting aquatic life and ecosystem health (Gupta & Tyagi, 2020; Kang *et al.,* 2019). Concentration of Nitrate and phosphate are consistent with previous studies on biological wastewater treatment, which have demonstrated the ability of microorganisms to metabolize and assimilate organic and inorganic pollutants (Martinez *et al.*, 2019; Smith & Johnson, 2020; Bisen *et al.,* 2023). The metabolic activities of *P. pastoris* X-33 likely contributed to the breakdown of nitrogen, phosphorus, sulfur, and chlorine compounds, as well as oil and grease molecules, resulting in their reduced concentrations in the treated wastewater. The observed reductions in mineral concentrations are essential for preventing eutrophication and maintaining ecological balance in receiving water bodies (Gupta & Tyagi,

S. No.	**Properties**	**Parameters**	**Biological Treatment by *Pichia pastoris* X-33 of S1**		**Biological Treatment by *Pichia pastoris* X-33 of S2**	
			Before Treatment	After Treatment	Before Treatment	After Treatment
1	Physical properties	Color	Brown	Creamy	Brown	Creamy
2		Odor	Foul	Foul	Foul	Foul
3		Temperature (°C)	35	30	38	31
4		Turbidity (NTU)	260	221	280	223
5		Electrical conductivity (µS/cm)	10254	8845	11298	9593
8		Total Suspended Solids (mg/l)	782	695	892	710
6	Chemical properties (measure in microgram par literexcept pH)	pH	5.50	5.90	5	5.90
7		Total Dissolved Solids	990	788	1100	597
9		Total Solids	3300	2930	4200	2997
10		Total Alkalinity	2124	1914	2467	1908
11		Total Hardness	2177	1937	2567	1994
12	Oxygen Demand (measure in microgram par liter)	Dissolved Oxygen	2.10	2.30	2.20	2.80
13		BOD	303	246	350	277
14		COD	1498	1016	1590	994
15	Minerals determination	Nitrate Determination	39	28	29	27.06
16		Phosphate Determination	80	68	91	82

17	(measure in microgram par liter)	Sulphate Determination	76	69	88	79
18		Chloride Determination	880	787	950	777
19	Others	Oil and Grease	20	18	24	15

2020).

Table 1: Characteristics of treated and untreated Rice Mill Wastewater with *Pichia pastoris* X-33 of S1 and *Pichia pastoris* X-33 of S2

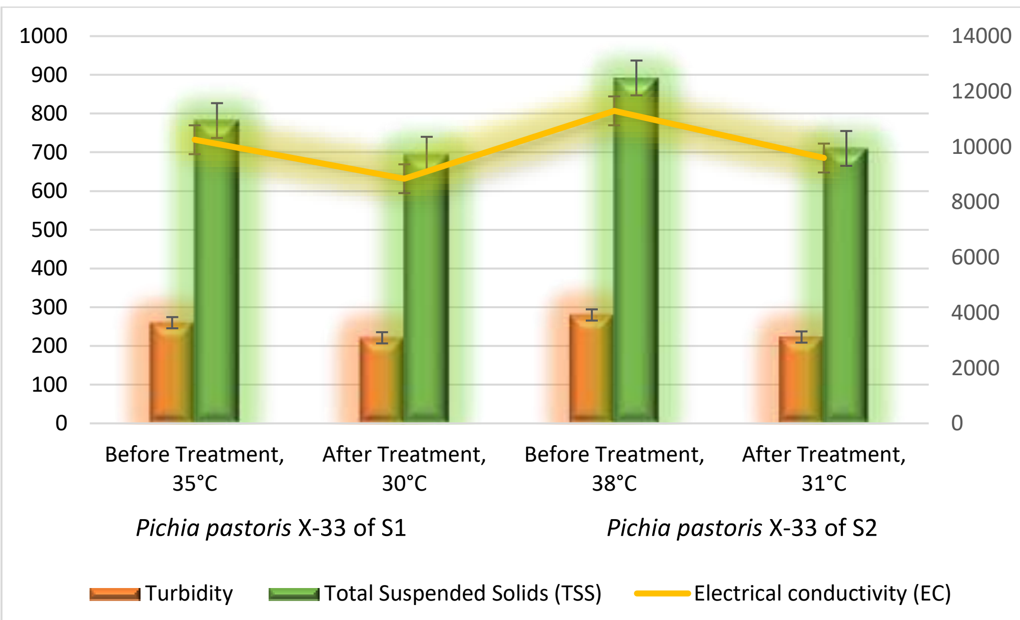

Figure 1: Physical characteristics of treated and untreated Rice Mill Wastewater with *Pichia pastoris*

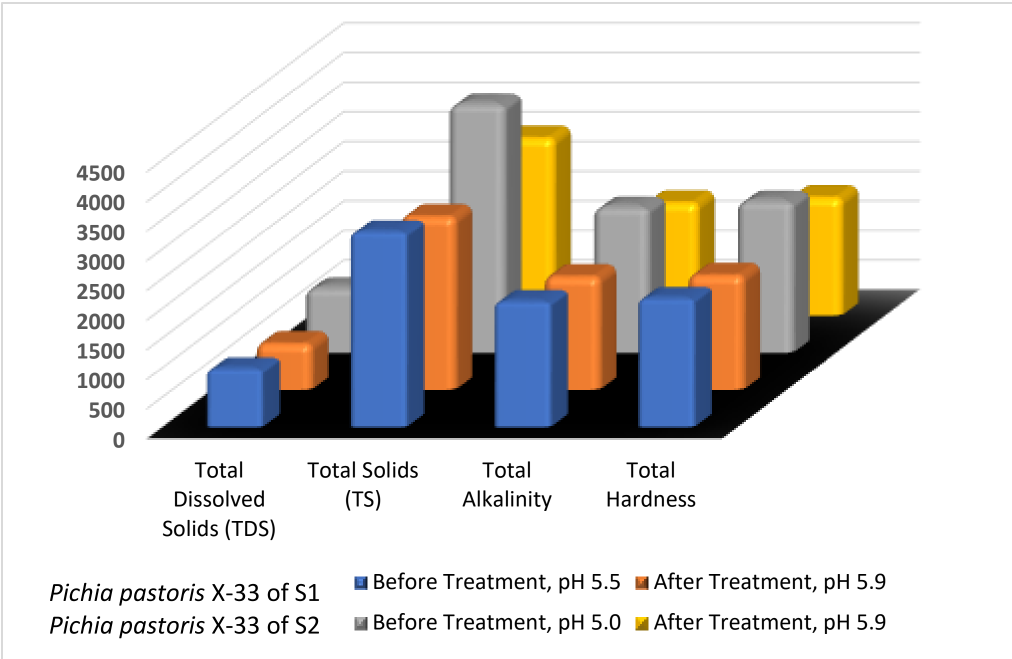

Figure 2: Chemical characteristics of treated and untreated Rice Mill Wastewater with *Pichia pastoris*

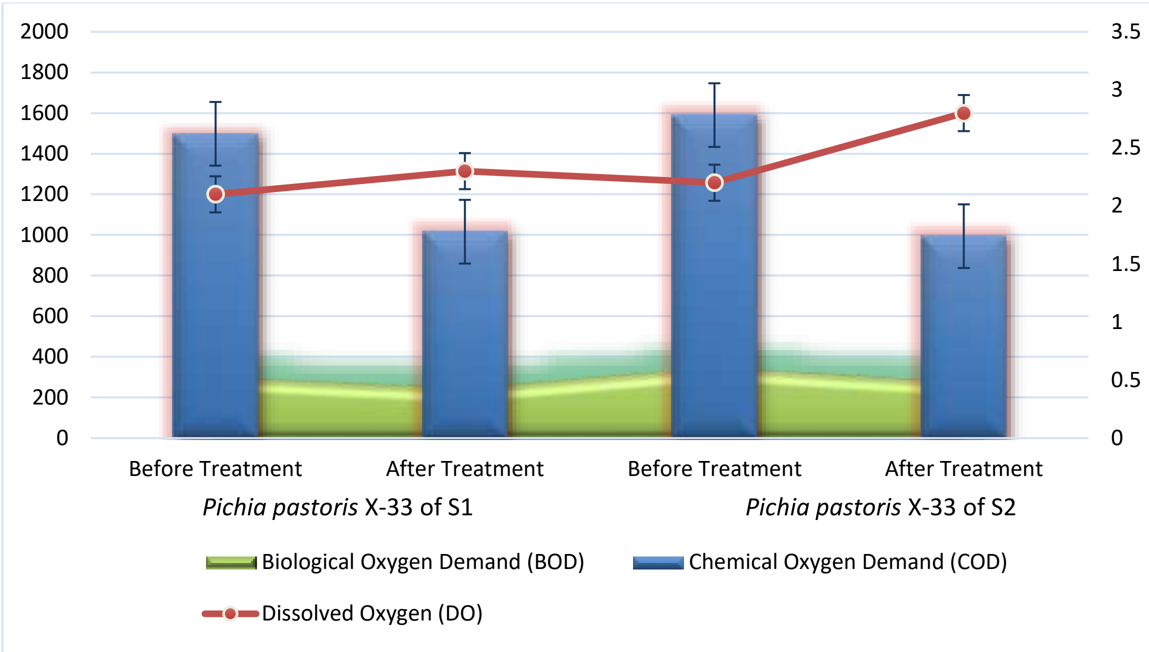

Figure 3: Oxygen demand of treated and untreated Rice Mill Wastewater with *Pichia pastoris*

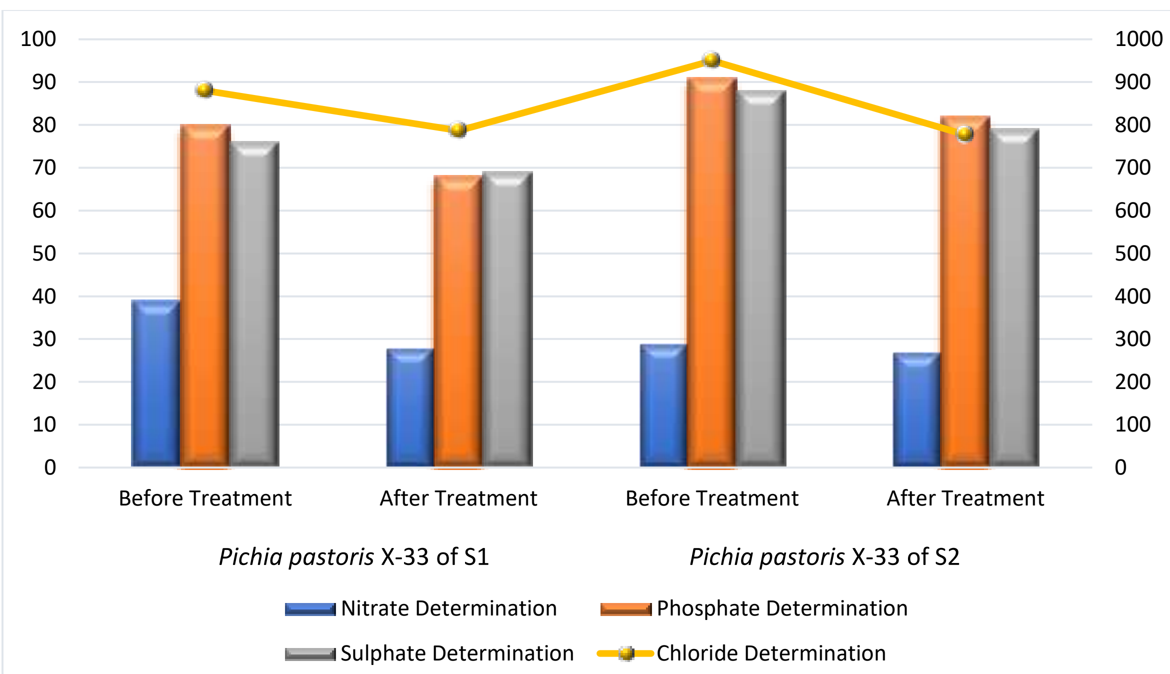

Figure 4: Mineral determination of treated and untreated Rice Mill Wastewater with *Pichia pastoris*

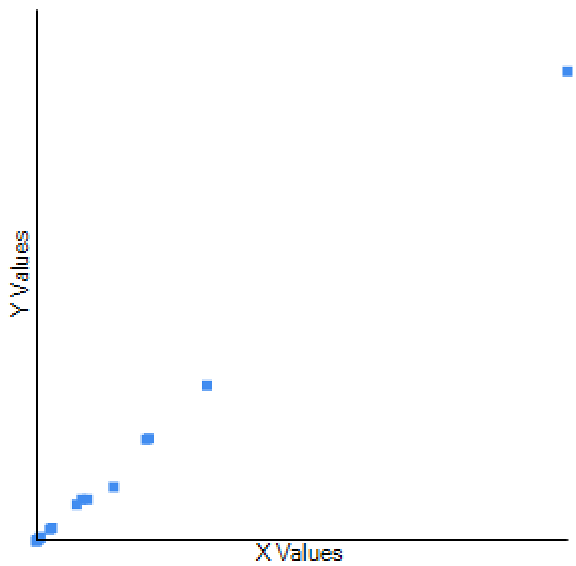

Figure 5: Correlation graph between different parameter, before and after treatment with *Pichia pastoris* X-33 of S1

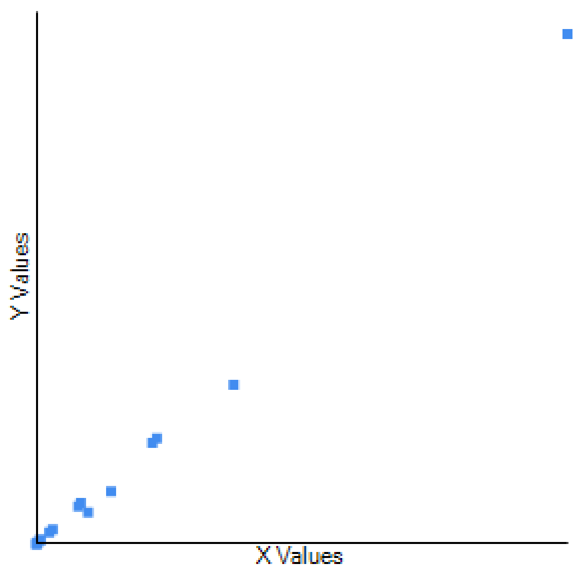

Figure 6: Correlation graph between different parameter, before and after treatment with *Pichia pastoris* X-33 of S2

Conclusion

The extensive biological treatment of rice mill wastewater using *P. pastoris* X-33 has shown remarkable efficacy in enhancing various physical, chemical, and mineral parameters. Upon comparing the biological treatment outcomes between samples S1 and S2, noticeable differences and similarities emerge. Despite minor variations in initial pollutant concentrations, both samples exhibited comparable enhancements in water quality parameters post-treatment. These findings underscore the versatility and effectiveness of *Pichia pastoris* X-33 in addressing pollution and advocating for sustainable water management practices in rice mill wastewater treatment. This study underscores the potential of biological treatment with *Pichia pastoris* X-33 as a sustainable and efficient method for remediating rice mill wastewater.

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