

Biological approach of zinc oxide nanoparticles formation and its characterization

Ravindra P. Singh*, Vineet K. Shukla, Raghvendra S. Yadav, Prashant K. Sharma, Prashant K. Singh, Avinash C. Pandey

Nanotechnology Application Centre, University of Allahabad, Allahabad 211002, India

*Corresponding author. Tel/Fax: (+91) 532 2460675; E-mail: rpsnpl69@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Herein, we are reporting a novel biological approach for the formation of zinc oxide (ZnO) nanoparticles using Maddar (*Calotropis procera*) latex at room temperature. X-Ray diffraction (XRD) pattern reveals the formation of ZnO nanoparticles, which shows crystallinity. Transmission electron microscopy (TEM) suggested particles size and shape in the range of 5-40 nm. Scanning electron microscopy (SEM) image reveals that the particles are of spherical and granular nature. UV-Vis absorption shows characteristic absorption peak of ZnO nanoparticles. Photoluminescence (PL) studies were performed to emphasize its emission properties. This simple and cost-effective biological approach for the formation of ZnO NPs has a promising application in biosensing, electronics and photonics. Copyright © 2011 VBRI press.

Keywords: Biological approach; *Calotropis procera*; zinc oxide; nanoparticles; biosensing.



Ravindra Pratap Singh received the PhD degree in Biochemistry from the Lucknow University, India, in 1999. From 2000 to 2003, he was a postdoctoral fellow at the IGI, France and then at IHBAS, Delhi, India as a senior demonstrator. In 2003 to 2007, he joined the Biosensor group in National Physical Laboratory New Delhi, India as postdoctoral Research Associate and Pool scientist CSIR and then in 2007-2009 joined as Research Professor at Sogang

University, South Korea, and from 2009-2010 joined as Research Professor at Pusan National University, Busan, South Korea. Currently, he has been working as DST scientist at Nanotechnology Application Centre, Allahabad University, India. He is working on biosensors, biochips, and biomemory. His research interests include all aspects of design, fabrication, and characterization of nanostructures and nanobiosensors, biosensors, biochips, protein chips, biomemory, and lab-on-a-chips.



Raghvendra S. Yadav received his postgraduate degree in the year 2003 from Allahabad University, India. He is pursuing his D. Phil degree from University of Allahabad, India since 2004. Currently, he is working as a scientist at Nanotechnology Application Centre, University of Allahabad, Allahabad, India. His area of research includes synthesis and characterization of rare-earth doped nanophosphors and semiconductor nanostructures. He has published more than 25

papers in international peer reviewed journals and reviewers of various international journals.



Prashant K. Sharma completed his B.Sc. in 2004 and Masters in Physics in the year 2006 from University of Allahabad, India. Since May 2006, he is at the Nanotechnology Application Centre (formerly Nanophosphor Application Centre), University of Allahabad, India, as a D.Phil. student. Presently he is working as Research Scientist at Nanotechnology Application Centre, University of Allahabad, Allahabad, India. His area of research includes, identification and optimization of the synthesis

methods for the highly efficient bare & doped nanophosphors with and without capping and determination of the corresponding functional properties in view of efficient LEDs, Opto-electronic, PDP and biomedical applications. Mr Sharma has expertise of wide range of material characterization techniques, especially Microscopic and Spectroscopic techniques. During this period he has published more than 40 papers in the refereed international Journals and 8 Patents to his credit.



Vineet Kumar Shukla did his M.Sc. from Deen Dayal University, Gorakhpur, India in 2006. He is pursuing his Ph.D. course at Nanotechnology Application Centre (NAC), University of Allahabad, India. His area of interest is nanomaterial synthesis by biological approaches and its application in biomedical domains.



Prashant Kumar Singh received his postgraduate degree in the year 2000 from University of Allahabad, India. He is pursuing his D. Phil. Degree since 2002 at the Centre for Biotechnology and Nanotechnology Application Centre, University of Allahabad. His area of research includes identification and optimization of the synthesis methods for nanoparticles and determination of the corresponding functional properties in view of biomedical applications. He has expertise

in nanomaterial synthesis and their microbiological investigations and published several papers in international peer reviewed journal.



Avinash Chandra Pandey holds four masters degrees namely M.Sc. (Physics, 1984), MBA (Marketing, 1993) and M.Sc. (Mathematics, 1996) from University of Allahabad, India and M. Tech.(Computer Science) from Motilal Nehru National Institute of Technology, Allahabad, India. He did his D. Phil. from University of Allahabad in the year 1995. Presently, he is working as Professor in Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences, University of Allahabad, Allahabad, India. He is an Associate of Abdus Salam International Centre

of Theoretical Physics (ICTP), Trieste, Italy and member of many professional bodies. His area of research includes ion beam techniques, nanomaterial synthesis and processing by ion beams and wet chemistry, bare & doped nanophosphors with and without capping and determination of the corresponding functional properties in view of efficient LEDs, Opto-electronic, PDP and biosensors for the biomedical applications. He has more than 150 scientific papers, in International and National conferences & Journals, to his credit. Fifteen students including Project Fellow(s) are pursuing research for the award of Ph.D. degree under his guidance and ten have been awarded for D.Phil degree.

Introduction

Nanomaterials have wide-ranging applications and implications in a variety of areas, including physics, chemistry, electronics, optics, materials science, and the biomedical sciences. Besides, the novel properties exhibited by the metal nanoparticles due to quantum size effects, their synthesis protocol pose a major environmental problem. The nanomaterials exhibit unique and considerably changed physical, chemical and biological properties when compared to their macro scaled i.e. bulk counterparts [1-3]. Nel et al. reported the nanoparticles interaction with biological materials and established a series of nanoparticle/biological interfaces that depend on colloidal forces as well as dynamic biophysicochemical interactions. These interactions lead to the formation of new nanomaterial with control size, shape, surface chemistry, roughness and surface coatings [4]. Furthermore, evidences suggested that the inorganic nanoparticles are very immense material because of their high surface area, it is easy to enter in cells via pores of plasma membrane proteins at nanoscale size. Apart from this, they have potential properties for sensing and detection of various biological analytes. For instance, the presence of semiconductor metal zinc oxide nanoparticles (< 30 nm) in the biological system have ability to altered biological properties. Zinc oxide nanoparticles have potential applications in various areas including optical,

piezoelectric, magnetic and gas sensing and also they exhibit high catalytic efficiency, strong adsorption ability, high isoelectric point (9.5), biocompatibility, and fast electron transfer kinetics for biosensing purposes [5-13].

Most of the synthetic physicochemical methods reported till date are heavily on the use of organic solvents and toxic reducing agents like thiophenol, mercapto acetate, sodium borohydride etc. Most of these chemicals are highly reactive and pose potential environmental and biological risks. With the increasing interest in minimization or elimination of such kinds of hazardous chemicals, the development of biological, biomimetic and biochemical approaches is desirable. Therefore, biological approach has advantages over physicochemical methods because of its clean, non-toxic chemicals, environmentally benign solvents, and user-friendly nature [14].

C. procera, is a desert plant known as Madar in Greco-Arab medicine. This plant is widely distributed in tropical and subtropical Africa and Asia. The different parts of the plant are used in Indian traditional medicine for the treatment of painful muscular spasm, dysentery, fever, rheumatism, asthma and as an expectorant and purgative [15, 16]. *C. procera*, is a plant with good enough quantities of latex i.e. milky liquid, when any mechanical damages, their tissues are broken and secrete the milky latex, consisting of several biologically active compounds, including proteins, amino acids, carbohydrates, lipids, vitamins, alkaloids, resins, and tannins. Predominantly, milky latex contains several alkaloids of interest such as calotropin, catotoxin, calcilin, gigatin etc [17]. To the best of our knowledge, biological approach using milky latex of *Calotropis procera* has been used for the first time as a reducing material as well as surface stabilizing agent for the synthesis of spherical-shaped ZnO-NPs. The structure, phase, and morphology of synthesized product were investigated by the standard characterization techniques.

Experimental

The zinc acetate dehydrate, sodium hydroxide, was purchased from E. Merck Ltd., Mumbai, India. The other all the reagents are of analytical purity grade and have been received from commercial sources. ZnO nanostructures were prepared by co-precipitation method. 0.02 M aqueous solution of zinc acetate dihydrate was put into 50 ml of distilled water under vigorous stirring. After 10 min stirring, Latex of Maddar 0.25, 0.5 ml and 1.0 ml was added in three set into the above solution. After addition of milky latex, 2.0 M NaOH aqueous solution was introduced into the above aqueous solution, resulting in a white aqueous solution at pH 12, which were then placed on magnetic stirrer for stirring for 2 hr. The precipitate was then taken out and washed repeatedly with distilled water followed by ethanol to remove the impurities for the final products. Then a white powder was obtained after drying at 60 °C in vacuum oven overnight. The whole mode of proposed method for the synthesis of ZnO NPs mediated by milky latex of *Calotropis procera*, was illustrated in the Fig.1.

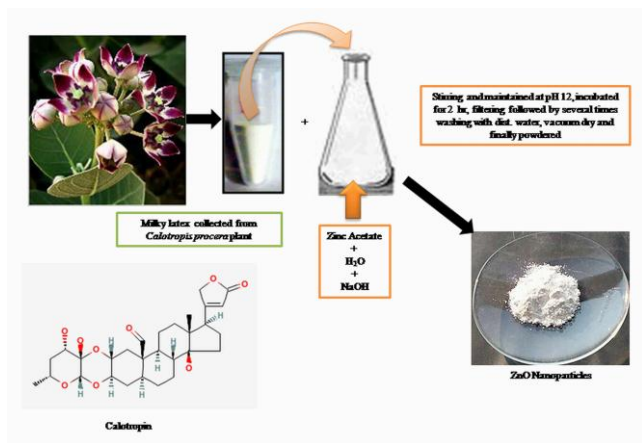


Fig. 1. Proposed procedure for the synthesis of ZnO nanoparticles formation.

Results and discussion

The biological approach for the formation of ZnO nanoparticles using Maddar (*Calotropis procera*) milky latex at room temperature was reported. The X-Ray diffraction (XRD) pattern reveals the formation of ZnO nanoparticles, which shows crystallinity. **Fig. 2** shows the XRD pattern of the heated and non-heated ZnO NPs powder embedded in calotropis matrix synthesized by co-precipitation method.

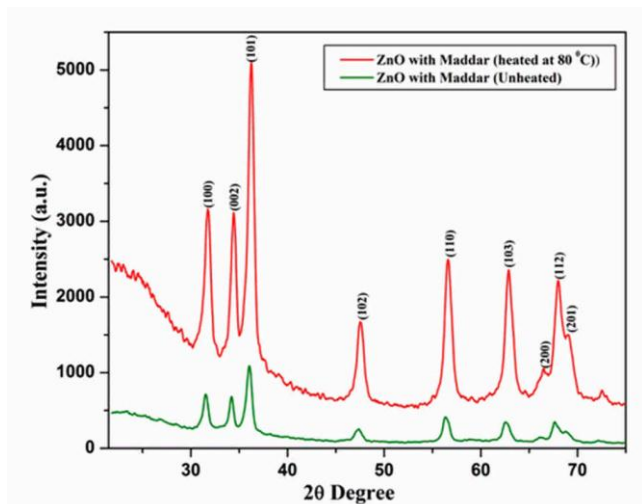


Fig. 2. XRD pattern of ZnO nanoparticles of heated and non heated sample.

When compare the both the samples, XRD Spectra showed strong diffraction peaks at 31, 34, 36, 47, 56, 62, 66, 67 and 68 degrees of 2θ which corresponds to (100), (002), (101), (102), (110), (103), (200), (112) and (201) crystal planes, which were in significant agreement with the JCPDS file 36145 ($a = b = 3.249 \text{ \AA}$, $c = 5.206 \text{ \AA}$) and indexed as the hexagonal wurtzite structure of ZnO having space group $P6_3mc$. It can be seen that ZnO NPs embedded in calotropis matrix, XRD peaks were not as sharp as in the case of non-heated as-prepared ZnO sample when compared with the heated sample, it means that the slight

decrease in crystallinity, which suggests the formation of smaller particle size.

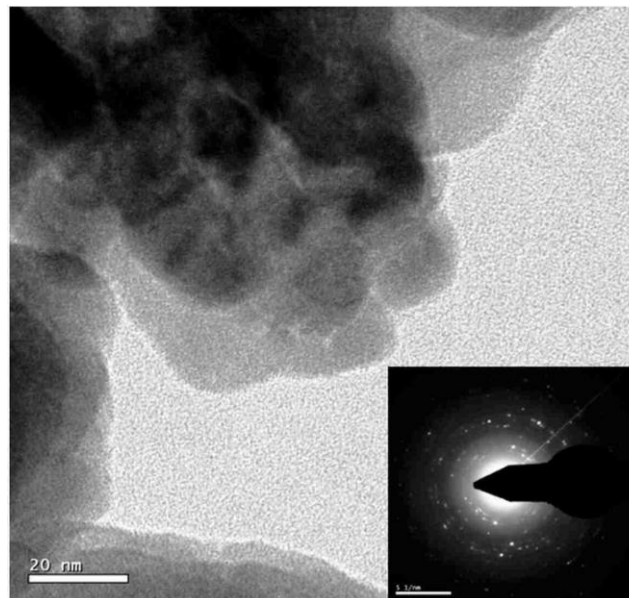


Fig. 3. TEM image shows ZnO nanoparticles in as-prepared sample with calotropis latex and inset shows selective area electron diffraction (SAED) pattern.

Fig. 3 TEM image shows ZnO nanoparticles with average size of 5-40 nm. Inset shows Selective area electron diffraction (SAED) pattern exhibits a set of rings containing spots suggesting that nanoparticles have a larger grain size, uniform shape and polycrystalline in nature. A TEM image was recorded by dissolving the as-synthesized powder sample in ethanol and then placed a drop ethanolic solution on the surface of copper grid.

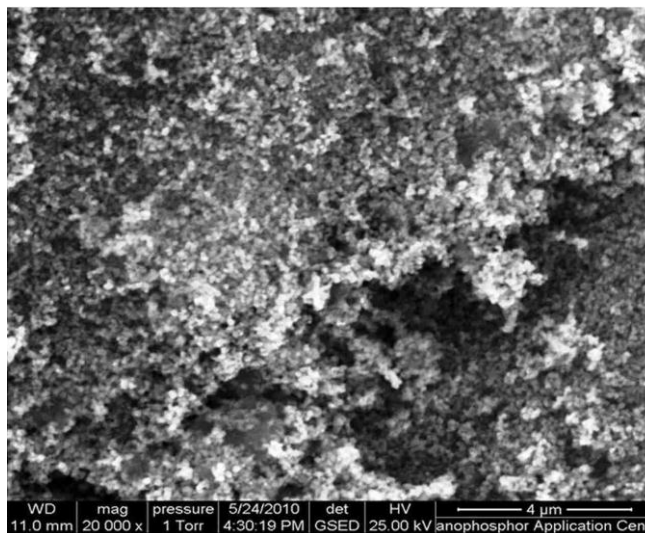


Fig. 4. SEM image shows the particles are of spherical and granular nanosized nature in as-prepared sample treated with calotropis latex.

The morphology of ZnO NPs embedded in calotropis matrix with little agglomeration having sizes about 5 nm throughout the carbon coated copper grid and average particles size and shape in the range of 5-40 nm. Scanning electron microscopy (SEM) image reveals that the particles

are of spherical and granular nanosized in nature as depicted in the **Fig. 4**.

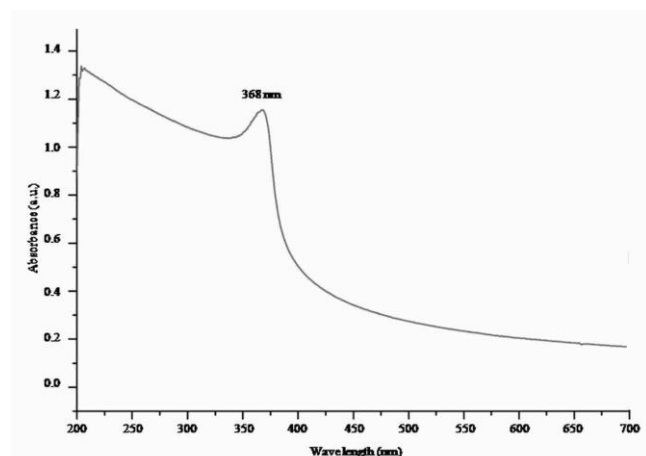


Fig. 5. UV-Vis absorption spectrum of as-prepared ZnO NPs, treated calotropis latex (Maddar) using optimal 0.5 ml volume in the proposed incubation cum precipitation method.

Optical properties of the as-prepared ZnO nanostructure sample was revealed by UV-Vis spectrum and photoluminescence spectroscopy at room temperature, as shown in **Fig. 5** and **6**, respectively. It can be seen from the **Fig. 5** that there was intensive absorption in the ultraviolet band of about 200-400 nm. The absorption wavelength at about 368 nm of ZnO suggested the excitonic character at room temperature.

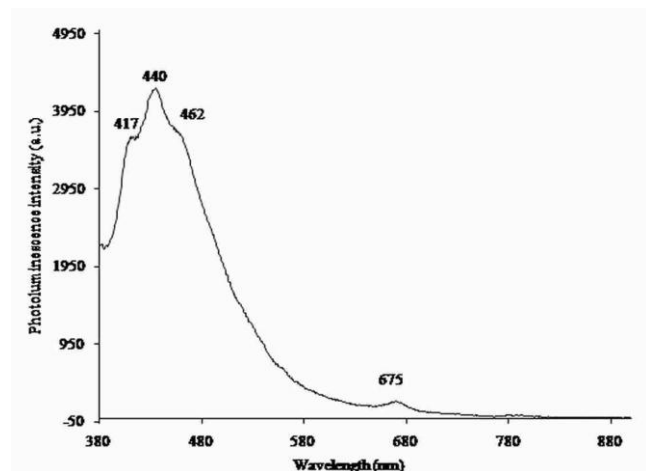


Fig. 6. PL spectrum of as-prepared ZnO NPs, treated calotropis latex (Maddar).

Photoluminescence (PL) studies were performed to emphasize its emission properties as shown in **Fig. 6**. The photoluminescence of ZnO sample suggested five emitting bands, including three blue bands at 417 nm 440 and at 462 nm, probable green band at 520 nm as well as one weak shoulder red band at around 675 nm have been observed in as-prepared ZnO sample. The PL of the ZnO sample in our case is considerably different from the typical observation in ZnO crystals, which usually exhibited UV emission at

around 385 nm and yellow-green emission around 495 nm [18]. Vanheusden et al. described that the UV emission is attributed to the radiative recombination between the electrons in the conduction band and the holes in the valence band [19], whereas Mahamuni et al. have described that the visible luminescence is due to defects related to deep level emission [20]. The blue band at 417, 440 and 462 nm may be in correlation with the defect structures in ZnO crystal. The green band at 520 nm and shoulder red band at 675 nm may be correlated to a transition between the oxygen vacancy and interstitial oxygen respectively [19, 21]. There has been no totally accepted explanation about the visible luminescence until now but more researches are needed for luminescence mechanism of ZnO.

Conclusion

Our findings could be targeted for the promising potential applications including biosensing devices, and nanoelectronic because of its pollution free and eco-friendly approach. This green synthesis approach shows that the environmentally benign and renewable latex of *C. procera* can be used as an effective stabilizing as well as reducing agent for the synthesis of zinc oxide nanoparticles. Zinc oxide nanoparticles synthesized by this approach are quite stable and no visible changes are observed even after a month. Synthesis of zinc oxide nanoparticles using milky latex is an alternative to chemical synthesis. We anticipate that the smaller particles are mostly stabilized by alkaloids and proteins. Further experiments for the systematic mode of mechanism of size selective synthesis of zinc oxide nanoparticles using this very useful milky latex are in progress.

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