

Study of Physical chemistry on Biosorption of copper by using *Sprulina* sp.

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Abstract: Discharge of heavy metals from metal processing industries is known to have adverse effects on the environment. Biosorption of heavy metals by metabolically inactive biomass of microbial organisms is an innovative and alternative technology for removal of these pollutants from aqueous solution. Presence of heavy metals in the aquatic system is posing serious problems and copper has been used in many industrials and removal of Cu ions from waste waters is significant. Biosorption is one of the economic methods that used for removal of heavy metals. In the present study, the biomass generated from the dried *Sprulina* sp. was used for evaluating the biosorption characteristics of Cu ions in aqueous solutions. Batch adsorption experiments were performed on these leaves and it was found that the amount of metal ions adsorbed increased with the increase in the initial metal ion concentration. In this study effect of agitation time, initial metal ion concentration, temperature, pH & biomass dosage were studied. Maximum metal uptake was observed at pH= 5. Maximum metal uptake (q_{max}) was 142.86 mg/g. The biosorption followed both Langmuir and Freundlich isotherm model. The adsorption equilibrium was reached in about 1 h. The kinetic of biosorption followed the second – order rate. The biomass could be regenerated using 0.1 M HNO_3 . A positive value of ΔH° indicated the endothermic nature of the process. A negative value of the free energy (ΔG°) indicated the spontaneous nature of the adsorption process. A positive value of ΔS° showed increased randomness at solid–liquid interface during the adsorption of heavy metals, it also suggests some structural changes in the adsorbate and the adsorbent. FTIR Spectrums of *Sprulina* sp. revealed the presence of hydroxyl, amino, carboxylic and carbonyl groups. The scanning electron micrograph (SEM) clearly revealed the surface texture and morphology of the biosorbent.

Keywords: biosorption, *Sprulina* sp., Cu, isotherm models, kinetic.

Introduction:

Copper is a very common substance that occurs naturally in the environment and spreads through the environment through natural phenomena. Humans widely use copper. For instance it is applied in the industries and in agriculture. The production of copper has lifted over the last decades and due to this copper quantities in the environment have expanded. Copper can be released into the environment by both natural sources and human activities. Long-term exposure to copper can cause irritation of the nose, mouth and eyes and it causes headaches, stomachaches, dizziness, vomiting and diarrhea. Intentionally high uptakes of copper may cause liver and kidney damage and even

death. Copper does not break down in the environment and because of that it can accumulate in plants and animals when it is found in soils. Biosorption is the binding and concentration of heavy metals from aqueous solutions (even very dilute ones) by certain types of inactive, dead, microbial biomass [1] Some of the advantages of biosorption include competitive performance, heavy metal selectivity, cost-effectiveness, regenerative and no sludge generation. Sources of biomass include seaweeds, microorganisms (bacteria, fungi, yeast, and molds), activated sludge and fermentation waste. Studies using Biosorbents have shown that both living and dead microbial cell are able to uptake metal ions and offer potential

inexpensive alternative to conventional absorbents [2, 3]. However, living cell is subject to toxic effect of the heavy metals, resulting in cell death. Moreover, living cell often require the addition of nutrients and hence increase the BOD and COD in the effluent. For these reasons, the use of non-living biomaterials or dead cells as metal binding compounds has been gaining advantage because toxic ions do not affect them. In addition, dead require less care and maintenance, and cheaper [4]. Furthermore, dead biomass could be easily regenerated and reused. The capability of some living microorganisms to accumulate metallic elements has been observed at first from toxicological point of view [5, 6, and 7]. However, further researches have revealed that inactive/dead microbial biomass can passively bind metal ions via various physicochemical mechanisms. Therefore researches on biosorption have become an active field for the removal of metal ions or organic compounds. Biosorbent behavior for metallic ions is a function of the chemical make-up of the microbial cells of which it consists [8]. Mechanisms responsible for biosorption, although understood to a limited extent, may be one or combination of ion exchange, complexation, coordination, adsorption, electrostatic interaction, chelation and micro precipitation [9, 10]. Recently, the commonly used methods applied to remove excessive copper from aqueous solutions have included ion exchange, chemical precipitation, activated carbon adsorption, evaporation and membrane processes. However, these methods were found to be either inefficient or expensive when metal ions exist in low concentrations (<100 mg/L) and may also be associated with the generation of secondary environmental problems from waste disposal [11, 12, 13].

Materials and methods

Biomass and culture medium: In this study *Sprulina* sp. (5143) obtained from National Collection of Industrial Microorganisms (NCIM) from PUNE - INDIA, which was isolated and thoroughly pure. The *Sprulina* sp. was maintained in modified *Spirulina* Media at 28 °C with using 3000 lx light intensity. After 21 days cultivation period cells were harvested by centrifugation and were washed several times with deionised water in order to remove culture media and was kept on a filter paper to reduce the water content. The biomass dried at 60 °C in an oven for 24 h and milled to a gritty consistency. The biomass was sieve for particle size smaller than 1 mm and stored in dark bottle and keeps in a dry cabinet for experiments. All of the media are sterilized by autoclaving at 121°C for 20 min.

Preparation of synthetic sample: A stock solution of 1000 mg/l of Cu was obtained by dissolving copper sulphate (Merck Company) in distilled water. The test solutions of various concentrations range from 10 mg/L to 100 mg/L were prepared from the stock solution. The solution pH was adjust using 0.1 M HNO₃ and 0.1 M NaOH at the beginning of the experiment and not controlled afterwards. The conical flasks (250 mL) were shaken at 120 rpm in a temperature controlled rotatory shaker.

Analysis of copper ions: copper ions were determined spectrophotometrically by atomic adsorption spectrophotometer (UNICAM, model 929, UK).

Batch biosorption studies: Batch mode adsorption studies for individual metal compounds were carried out to investigate the effect of different parameters such as adsorbate concentration, adsorbent dose, agitation time and pH. Solution containing adsorbate and adsorbent was taken in 250 mL capacity conical flask and agitated at 120 rpm in a shaker at predetermined time intervals. The adsorbate was decanted and separated from the adsorbent using whatman No.41 filter paper.

Effect of agitation time and initial concentration: For the determination of rate of metal biosorption by biomasses from 100 ml (at 10, 20, 50, 100 mg/L) on conical flask 250 mL, the supernatant was analyzed for residual metal at different time intervals. The pH and the adsorbent dosage was kept constant at pH= 5± 0.01, which varied according to the adsorbent and adsorbate under consideration. Amount of biomass dosage was 0.1±0.001 g for biomass (*Sprulina* sp.) and temperature was 25 ±1 °C and agitation speed of shaker was 120 rpm.

Effect of adsorbent dosage and initial concentration: The effect of adsorbent dosage i.e., the amount of the biomasses on the adsorption of metals was studied at different dosages ranging from 0.1 to 3 g with varied metal concentrations of 10, 20 and 50 mg/L. The equilibrium time and the pH were kept constant depending on the metal under consideration. The pH and the adsorbent dosage was kept constant at pH= 5± 0.01, which varied according to the adsorbent and adsorbate under consideration. Agitation time was 120 minute for biomass (*Sprulina* sp.) and temperature was 25 ±1 °C and agitation speed of shaker was 120 rpm.

Effect of pH and initial concentration: To determine the effect of pH on the adsorption of metal solutions (100 mL) of different concentration ranges (10, 20 and 50 mg/L) at conical flask 250 mL were adjusted to desired pH values and mixed with constant amount of adsorbent and agitated at preset equilibrium time. The equilibrium time and adsorbent dosage varied with the metal and adsorbent under consideration. Amount of biomass dosage was 0.1 ± 0.001 g for e biomass (*Sprulina* sp.) and temperature was 25 ± 1 °C and agitation speed of shaker was 120 rpm and contact time was 120 min.

Effect of temperature: Optimum biomass concentration with optimum pH was used to monitor the temperature effect on biosorption. Experiments were carried out at different temperatures from 10-40 °C for each culture and kept on rotary shaker at 120 rpm. The samples were allowed to attain equilibrium. To determine the effect of temperature on the adsorption of metal solutions (100 mL) of concentration 50 mg/L at conical flask 250 mL were adjusted to desired pH values and mixed with constant amount of adsorbent and agitated at preset equilibrium time. The equilibrium time and adsorbent dosage varied with the metal and adsorbent under consideration. Amount of biomass dosage was 0.1 ± 0.001 g for biomass (*Sprulina* sp.) and pH was

5 ± 0.001 and agitation speed of shaker was 120 rpm and contact time was 120 min.

Desorption studies: After adsorption, the adsorbates – loaded adsorbent were separated from the solution by centrifugation and the supernatant was drained out. The adsorbent was gently washed with water to remove any unadsorbed adsorbate. Regeneration of adsorbate from the adsorbate – laden adsorbent was carried out using the desorbing media – distilled water at pH ranges using dilute solutions of EDTA, HCL and HNO₃ (Stirred at 120 rpm for 120 min at 25 °C). Then they were agitated for the equilibrium time of respective adsorbate. The desorbed adsorbate in the solution was separated and analyzed for the residual heavy metals.

FT-IR spectroscopy (Fourier Transform Infrared): In order to determine the functional groups responsible for Cu biosorption, IR spectroscopy was used that about 0.1 g biomass was mixed with KBr for FT-IR spectra analysis (**Shimadzu model 8400**).

SEM (Scanning Electron Microscopy): The SEM was used to investigate the morphology of the biosorbent. We used samples with pH=5 and $C_0 = 10$ mg.L⁻¹. Scanning Electron Microscope (**SEM, JEOL, JSM-6360A**) used for this study.

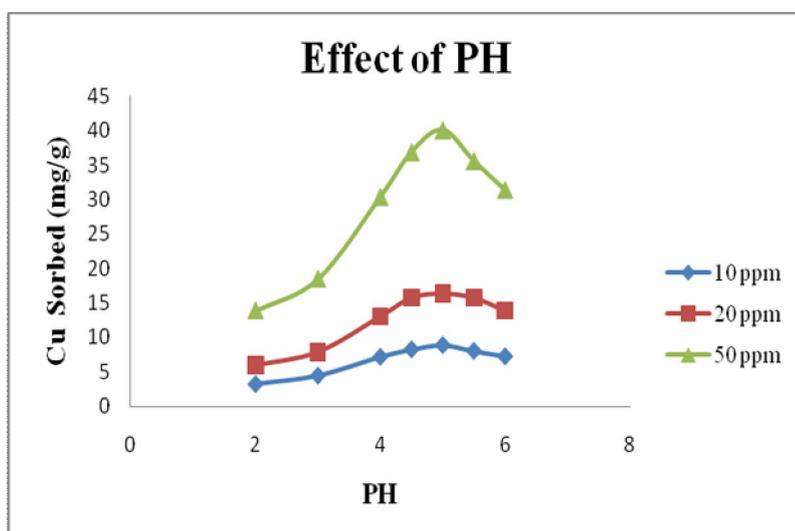


Fig.1 Effect of pH on biosorption of Cu by *Sprulina* sp.(biomass dose=0.1 g, initial Cu ion concentration = 10, 20 and 50 mg L⁻¹; temperature = 25 °C; agitation speed = 120 rpm; contact time = 120 min).

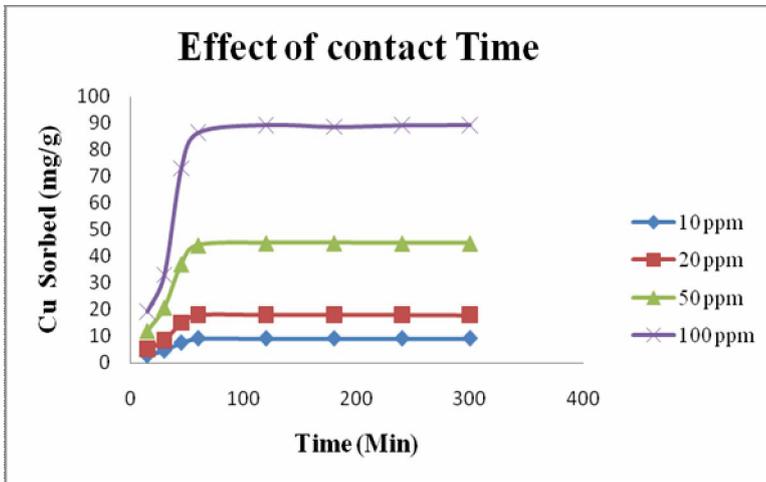


Fig.2 Effect of Contact Time on biosorption of Cu by *Sprulina* sp.(biomass dose=0.1 g, pH=5, initial Cu ion concentration = 10, 20 50 and 100 mg l⁻¹; temperature = 25 °C; agitation speed = 120 rpm).

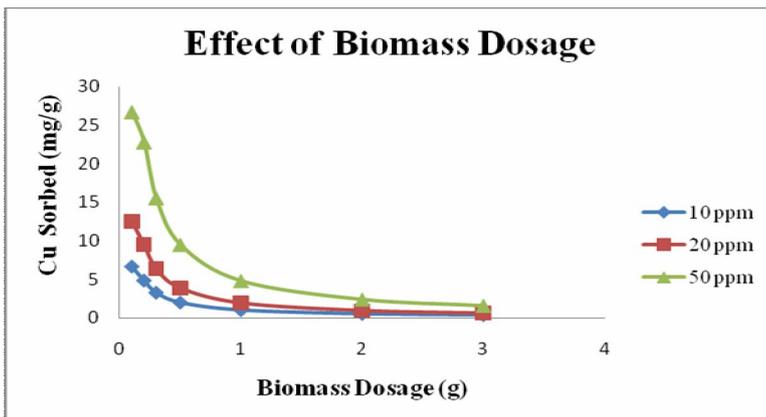


Fig.3Effect of Biomass Dosage on biosorption of Cu by *Sprulina* sp.(pH=5, initial Cu ion concentration = 10, 20 and 50 mg l⁻¹; temperature = 25 °C; agitation speed = 120 rpm; contact time = 120 min).

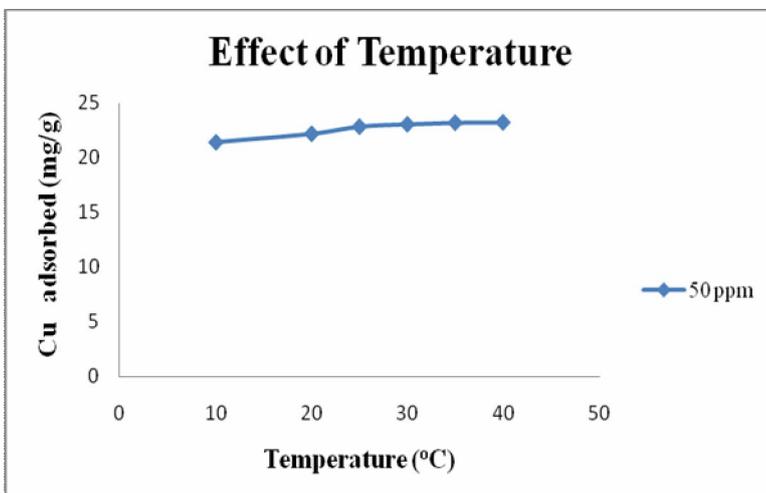


Fig.4 Effect of Temperature on biosorption of Cu by *Sprulina* sp.(biomass dose=0.1 g, pH=5, initial Cu ion concentration = 50 mg l⁻¹; temperature = 25 °C; agitation speed = 120 rpm; contact time = 120 min).

Results:

Results on the effect of pH of Cu at different initial metal ion concentrations by *Sprulina* sp. present in the **Figures 1**. Maximum percentage of biosorption occurred at the initial concentration of 10 mg/L at the time of 120 minute at pH= 5 for Cu was 90.09 % and metal ion uptake capacity was 9.01 mg/g and when initial concentration of Cu increased to 50 mg/L, percentage of biosorption of Cu was 84.44 % and uptake capacity was 42.22 mg/g for *Sprulina* sp.. With increase the initial concentration percentage of biosorption decreased and metal ion uptake capacity was increased.

Results on the contact time of copper at different initial metal ion concentrations by *Sprulina* sp. present in the **Figures 2**. The time required to reach equilibrium for Cu adsorption by *Sprulina* sp. was 60 minute for all initial metal ion concentrations. In the initial concentration of 10 mg/L at the time of 60 minute percentage of remove of Cu was 86.33 % and metal ion uptake capacity was 8.63 mg/g and when initial concentration of Cu increased to 100 mg/L, percentage of remove of Cu was 73.67 % and uptake capacity was 73.67 mg/g for *Sprulina* sp. The time taken for Cu adsorption by *Sprulina* sp. was dependent on initial metal ion concentration and increased with increase in concentration of Cu. With increase the initial concentration percentage of biosorption decreased and metal ion uptake capacity was increased.

Results on the effect of biomass dosage of Cu at different initial metal ion concentrations by *Sprulina* sp. present in the **Figures 3**. percentage of biosorption occurred at the initial concentration of 10 mg/L at the time of 120 minute at pH= 5 and 0.1± 0.001 g of biomass for Cu was 90.09 % and metal ion uptake capacity was 9.01 mg/g and when initial concentration of Cu increased to 50 mg/L, percentage of biosorption of Cu was 95.78 % and uptake capacity was 1.60 mg/g for *Sprulina* sp.. When amount of biomass increased from 0.1 ± 0.001 g to 3 ± 0.001 g , percentage of biosorption occurred at the initial concentration of 10 mg/L at the time of 120 minute at pH= 5 for Cu was 99.35 % and metal ion uptake capacity was 0.331 mg/g and when initial concentration of Cu increased to 50 mg/L , percentage of biosorption of Cu was 95.78 % and uptake capacity was 1.57 mg/g for *Sprulina* sp.. With increase the initial concentration percentage of biosorption decreased and metal ion uptake capacity was increased. With increased the amount of biomass

observed that percentage of biosorption increased and metal ion uptake capacity was decreased.

Results on the effect of temperature of Cu at initial metal ion concentration of 50 mg/L by *Sprulina* sp. present in the **Figures 4**. Maximum percentage of biosorption occurred at the initial concentration of 50 mg/L at the time of 120 minute at pH= 5 for Cu was 89.36 % and metal ion uptake capacity was 36.41 mg/g at the temperature of 40 °C for *Sprulina* sp.. The findings of *Sprulina* sp. indicate that the sorption percentage increased with increase in temperature up to 40 °C.

Equilibrium isotherms : The isotherm studies were performed in the solution with the initial concentrations ranging from 10 to 100 mg/L at optimum pH values for ions (pH=4.5 or pH = 5) .After shaking the flask containing the mixture of biomass (120 rpm, 25 °C) and ions for 120min, the amount of residual ions in the filtrated solution was analyzed. The biosorption equilibrium uptake capacity for each sample was calculated according to mass balance on the ions expressed in this equation:

$$q_e = \frac{(C_0 - C_e)}{M} \times V$$

where V is the sample volume (L), C_0 is the initial ion concentration (mg/L), C_e is the equilibrium or final ion concentration (mg/L) , M is the biomass dry weight (g), and q_e is the biomass biosorption equilibrium ions uptake capacity (mg/g). Langmuir and Freundlich isotherms, the two classical adsorption models, were used to describe the equilibrium between adsorbed ions on the biomass cell (q_e , q) and ions in the solution (C_e , q) in this study.

Langmuir isotherm model:

$$q_e = \frac{q_{\max} C_e b}{1 + C_e b}$$

That after arrange we have;

$$\frac{C_e}{q_e} = \frac{1}{q_{\max} b} + \frac{C_e}{q_{\max}}$$

These values q_{\max} and b (where b, is the adsorption equilibrium constant) can be obtained from the slopes and the intercepts of the linear plots respectively, where experimental data of C_e/q_e as the function of C_e , as shown in **Figure 5** .The empirical Freundlich equation based on sorption on a heterogeneous surface, on the other hand, is as follows:

$$q_e = K_f (C_e)^n$$

K and **n**: An experimental constant, K is an indication of the adsorption capacity of the adsorbent; n indicates the effect of concentration on the adsorption capacity and represents adsorption intensity. The equation can be linearized in the following logarithmic form:

$$\ln q_e = \ln k_f + \frac{1}{n} \ln C_e$$

These values n & K_f can be obtained from the slopes and the intercepts of the linear plots respectively, where experimental data of $\ln q_e$ as the function of $\ln C_e$. The equilibrium experimental results of copper ions have been fitted in the Langmuir and Freundlich models. For biosorption of Copper using *Spirulina sp.* the coefficient of determination (R^2) of both models was mostly close to 1 as shown in **Figure 6**. This indicates that both models adequately describe the experimental data of the biosorption of Copper. In the biosorption of copper by *Spirulina sp.*, most of the metal ions were sequestered very fast from the

solutions in the first phase of contact time 60 minutes and almost no increase in the level of bound metal have been occurred after this time interval. Biosorption equilibrium isotherms were plotted for metal uptake q against the residual metal concentration in the solution. The q verses C_f sorption isotherm relationship was mathematically expressed by Langmuir and Freundlich models. The higher the values of k and n; lower the value of b, the higher the affinity of the biomass. **Table1** describes summaries of linear regression data for Langmuir and Freundlich isotherms for Copper biosorption using *Spirulina sp.* biomass.

Langmuir and Freundlich constant k were obtained from the linear equations of both models. As indicated in the **Table 1**, the coefficients of determination (R^2) of both models are close to 1. In the **Table 1** the values of K_f , n, q_{max} and b were given.

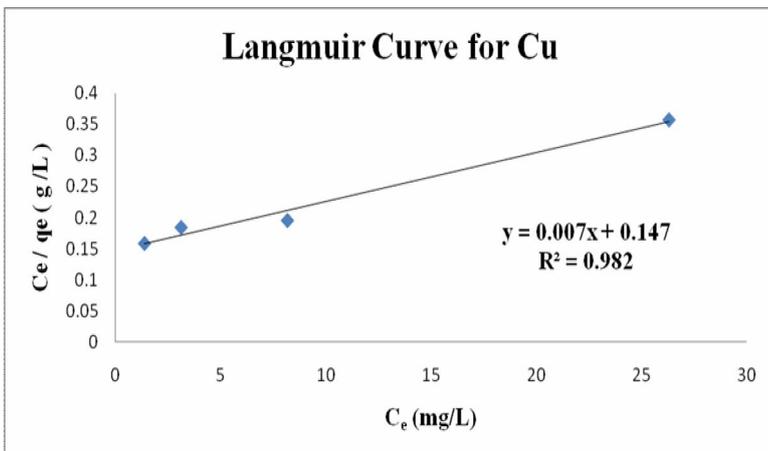


Fig.5 Langmuir adsorption isotherm for Cu by *Spirulina sp.* (q_{max} = 142.85 mg/g , b= 0.047L/mg).

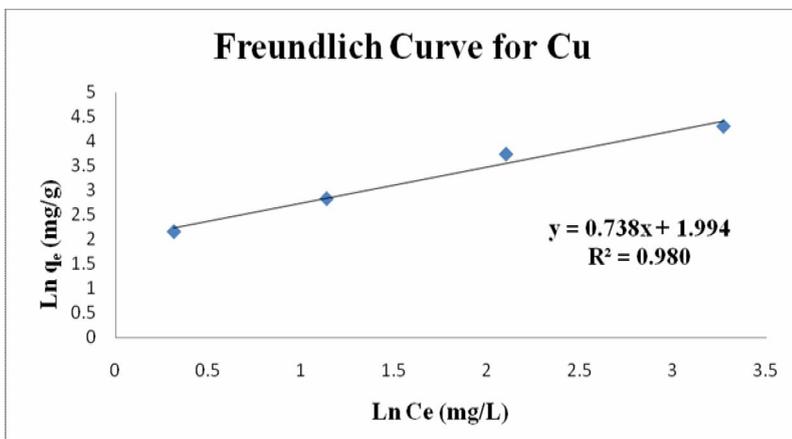


Fig.6 Freundlich adsorption isotherm for Cu by *Spirulina sp.* (n=1.35, K= 7.34)

Table. 1 Parameters of isotherm models for Copper

Biomass	Langmuir Parameters			Freundlich parameters		
	q_{max} (mg/g)	b (L/mg)	R^2	K_f	n	R^2
<i>Spirulina sp.</i>	142.85	0.047	0.982	7.34	1.35	0.980

Table. 2 Type of isotherm for various R_L

R_L	$R_L > 1$	$R_L = 1$	$0 < R_L < 1$	$R_L = 0$
Type of isotherm	Un favorable	Linear	Favorable	Irreversible

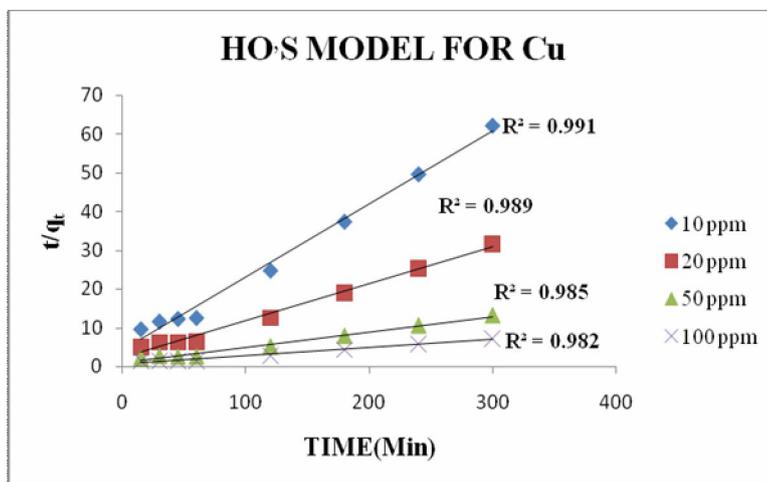


Fig.7 Plot of HO'S Model (Pseudo Second Order Rate) for Cu by *Spirulina sp.*

Kinetic modeling: Figure 7 shows the experimental break through curves for the effects of contact time on a bound rate of Cu. It can be observed that the adsorption of copper ions quickly increased at the beginning of biosorption, but after 15 min, the adsorption slowed down. The result indicated that the maximum adsorbed amount of the copper ions was achieved within 60min, and then followed by a longer equilibrium period. After this equilibrium period, the amount of adsorbed ions did not significantly change with the adsorption time. Therefore, for the following experiments, the contact time was maintained for 60 min to ensure that equilibrium was fully achieved.

The pseudo-second-order equation is also based on the sorption capacity, which is expressed

$$\text{as: } \frac{t}{q_t} = \frac{1}{(K_2 q_e^2)} + \frac{t}{q_e}$$

Where K_2 is the rate constant of pseudo-second-order sorption ($g \cdot mg^{-1} \cdot min^{-1}$). $K_2 q_e^2$ is the initial rate constant (represented by h , $mg \cdot g^{-1} \cdot min^{-1}$). Plotting t/q_t versus t will give a straight line. The values of q_e and K_2 can be determined from the slope and intercept of the plot, respectively. The results showed that the pseudo-second-order model fitted the simulation curve much better than the pseudo-first-order model for Cu. The results of pseudo-second-order model showed on the **Table 2**. The coefficient of determination (R^2) and K_2 HO'S Model for the different metal ion concentration under study for has been established as: $10 \text{ ppm} > 20 \text{ ppm} > 50 \text{ ppm} > 100 \text{ ppm}$ With increase the initial concentration coefficient of determination (R^2) and K_2 decreased.

Table. 3 Parameter of kinetic model for Copper of *Sprulina* sp.

Concentration of Cu	Equation	R ²	K ₂
10 mg/L	y = 0.188x + 4.154	0.991	8.51 × 10 ⁻³
20 mg/L	y = 0.095x + 2.322	0.989	3.89 × 10 ⁻³
50 mg/L	y = 0.039x + 1.055	0.985	1.44 × 10 ⁻³
100 mg/L	y = 0.021x + 0.608	0.982	7.25 × 10 ⁻⁴

Table. 4 Thermodynamic parameters for the adsorption of heavy metals by *Sprulina* sp.

Heavy Metals	ΔH° (J mol ⁻¹ K ⁻¹)	ΔS° (J K ⁻¹ mol ⁻¹)	-Δ°G (J.mol ⁻¹ K ⁻¹)					
			283 K	293 K	298 K	303 K	308 K	313 K
Cu	14415.09	55.23	43.25	110.79	180.87	240.58	301.62	351.49

Equilibrium parameter R_L: The essential characteristics of a Langmuir isotherm can be expressed in terms of a dimensionless constant separation factor or equilibrium parameter R_L, which is defined by

$$R_L = 1/1+bC_0$$

Where C₀ is the initial adsorbate concentration (mg/L) and b is the Langmuir constant (L/mg). The parameter indicates the shape of the isotherm as follows (**Table3**).

The R_L values at different initial adsorbate concentrations indicate favorable adsorption for all the adsorbents and adsorbates studied.

Thermodynamic studies: Adsorption, studies in the temperature range 283–313 K were conducted to determine thermodynamics constants such as Gibbs free energy change (ΔG°), enthalpy change (ΔH°) and entropy change (ΔS°) for the system and to ascertain the sorption mechanism. For this study, adsorbent dosage selected was 0.1 gr. and copper concentration was 50 mg L⁻¹ with pH= 5 in a conical flask and allowed to equilibrate for 1 h at the different temperatures ranging from 283 to 313 K. In order to determine thermodynamic parameters, experiments were carried out at different temperatures in the range of 283–313 K for heavy metals adsorption. The thermodynamic parameters such as standard Gibbs free energy change (ΔG°), enthalpy change (ΔH°) and entropy change (ΔS°) were estimated to evaluate the feasibility and nature of the adsorption process. The Gibbs free energy change, of the process is related to equilibrium constant by the equation:

$$\Delta G^\circ = -RT \ln K_c$$

where, T is temperature in K, R is ideal gas constant having value as 8.314, J mol⁻¹ K⁻¹ and K_C is thermodynamic equilibrium constant. The thermodynamic equilibrium constant, was determined

$$\text{as: } K_c = \frac{C_a}{C_e}$$

Where, C_a is mg of adsorbent adsorbed per liter and C_e is the equilibrium concentration of solution, mg/L. According to thermodynamics, the Gibbs free energy change is also related to the enthalpy change (ΔH°) and entropy change (ΔS°) at constant temperature by the following Van't Hoff equation:

$$\ln K_c = \frac{-\Delta H^\circ}{R} \frac{1}{T} + \frac{\Delta S^\circ}{R}$$

The values of enthalpy change (ΔH°) and entropy change (ΔS°) were calculated from the slope and intercept of the plot lnK_c versus, 1/T. Results on the Plots of Van't Hoff equation for the estimation of thermodynamic parameters by *Sprulina* sp. present in the **Figures 8**.The calculated values of thermodynamic parameters are reported in **Table 4**.A positive value of ΔH° indicated the endothermic nature of the process. A negative value of the free energy (ΔG°) indicated the spontaneous nature of the adsorption process. It was also noted that the change in free energy, increases with increase in temperature, which exhibits an increase in adsorption with rise in temperature. This could be possibly because of activation of more sites on the surface of biomasses with increase in temperature. A positive value of ΔS° showed increased randomness at solid–liquid interface during the adsorption of heavy metals, it also suggests some structural changes in the adsorbate and the adsorbent.

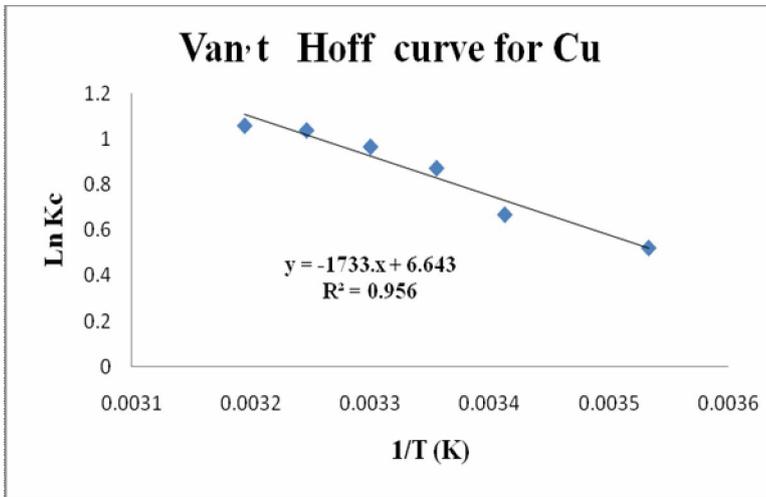


Fig. 8 Plot of Van't Hoff equation for the estimation of thermodynamic parameters for biosorption of Cu by *Sprulina* sp.

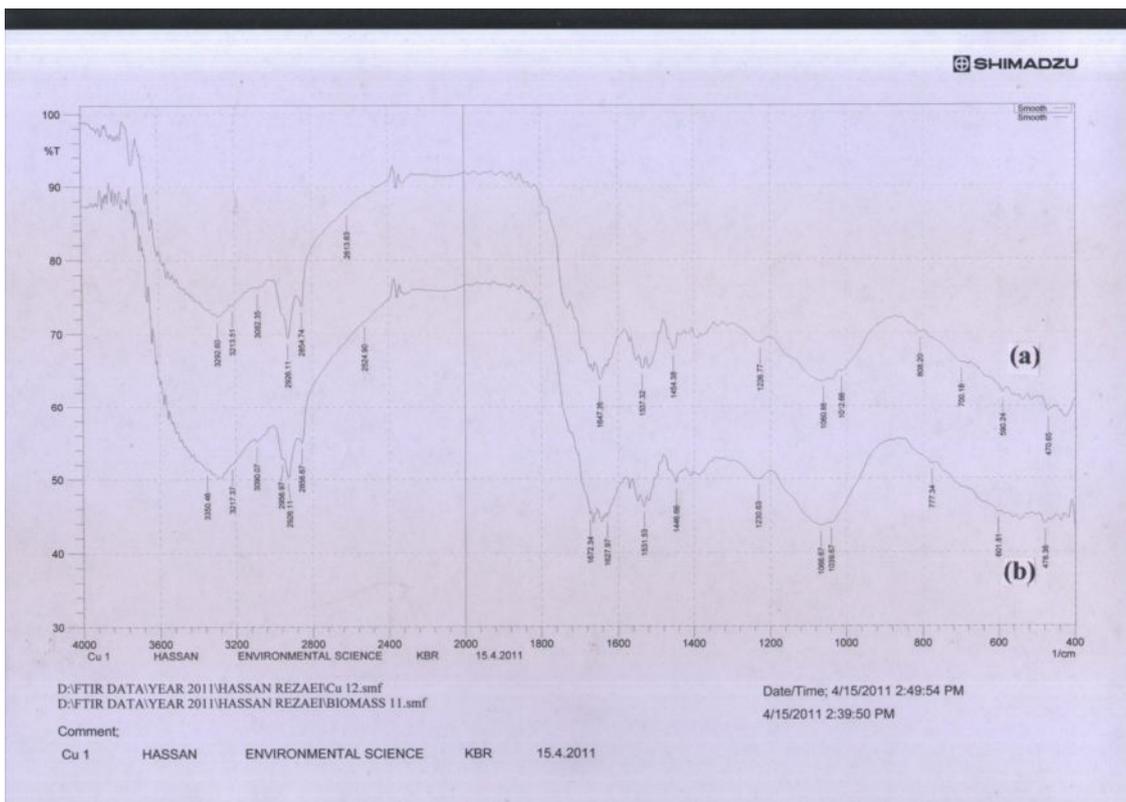


Fig.9 FTIR Spectrum of the *Sprulina* sp. (before (b) and after (a) biosorption of Cu).

Table .5 The desorption efficiency of different desorbent

Desorbent	EDTA (0.1M)	HCL(0.1M)	HNO ₃ (0.1M)
% Desorption of Cu	64.88 ±4.66	90.08 ±4.15	92.69 ±2.61

FRIR Spectroscopy of Sprulina sp.: Spectrums of Sprulina sp. present in the **Figure 9** that revealed the presence of hydroxyl, amino, carboxylic and carbonyl groups. The presence of OH group along with carbonyl group confirmed the presence of carboxylic acid groups in the biosorbent. The presence of NH group and OH group along with carbonyl group might be attributed the presence of amino acid groups in the biosorbent.

Scanning electron microscopy (SEM): Scanning electron microscopy (SEM) of Sprulina sp. at before and after biosorption of copper present in the **Figures 10 and 11** respectively. The scanning electron micrograph clearly revealed the surface texture and morphology of the biosorbent at different

magnifications. The SEM analysis revealed important information on surface morphology. In these micrographs structures with large surface area were evident.

Desorption studies :Desorption and regeneration studies of the adsorbates showed that regeneration and recovery of the adsorbates is possible. Chemisorption/ion exchange was the main mechanism by which the adsorbates (metals) were attached to the adsorbents. Physical adsorption played a minimal role in the process .The result of desorption studies of Cu in a batch system showed that HNO₃ (0.1 M) was more efficient in Cu desorption, which remove 95% copper ions (**Table 5**).

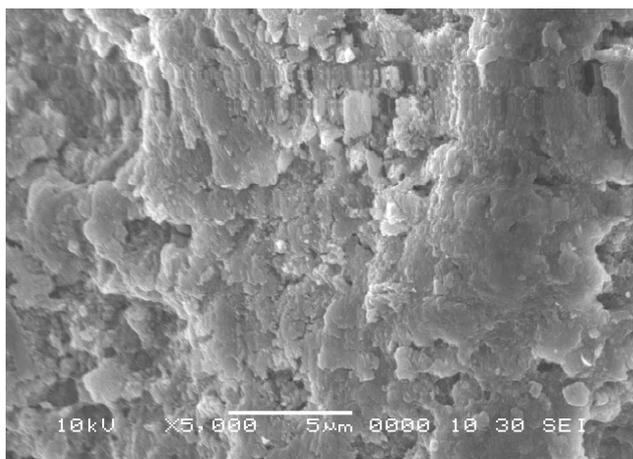


Fig.10 Scanning electron microscopy (SEM) micrographs of the Sprulina sp. before biosorption.

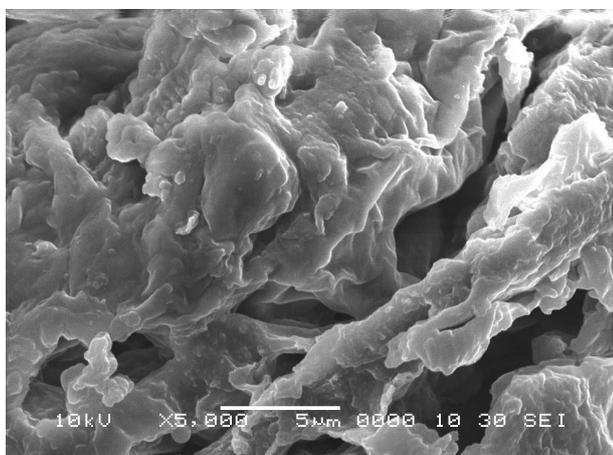


Fig.11 Scanning electron microscopy (SEM) micrographs of the Sprulina sp. after biosorption of Cu.

Conclusions:

The batch experiment conducted with the biosorption demonstrated that biomass of *Sprulina* sp. exhibited the potential for Cu removal from aqueous solution. Optimum pH and temperature for biosorption in this study were 5 and 25 °C, respectively. The time taken for Cu adsorption by *Sprulina* sp. was dependent on initial metal ion concentration and increased with increase in concentration of Cu. With increase the initial concentration percentage of biosorption decreased and metal ion uptake capacity was increased. With increased the amount of biomass observed that percentage of biosorption increased and metal ion uptake capacity was decreased. The findings of *Sprulina* sp. indicate that the sorption percentage increased with increase in temperature up to 40 °C and there was a decrease in sorption percentage with further increase in temperature. The removal of Cu increase with increase in biosorbent. The biosorption process was followed both Langmuir and Freundlich

isotherm model. The pseudo second-order kinetics described the experimental data well. The equilibrium time was 60 min. The R_L values at different initial adsorbate concentrations indicate favorable ($0 < R_L < 1$) adsorption for all the adsorbents and adsorbates studied. HNO_3 (0.1M) had higher efficiency of Cu desorption than EDTA (0.1M) and HCL(0.1M) with 92.69% efficiency desorption. A positive value of ΔH° indicated the endothermic nature of the process. A negative value of the free energy (ΔG°) indicated the spontaneous nature of the adsorption process. A positive value of ΔS° showed increased randomness at solid-liquid interface during the adsorption of heavy metals, it also suggests some structural changes in the adsorbate and the adsorbent. FTIR Spectrums of *Sprulina* sp. revealed the presence of hydroxyl, amino, carboxylic and carbonyl groups. The scanning electron micrograph (SEM) clearly revealed the surface texture and morphology of the biosorbent.

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