

New Opportunities in Sustainable Nano Materials from Agro Waste

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Green chemistry started for the search of benign methods for the development of nanoparticles from nature and their use in the field of antibacterial, antioxidant, and antitumor applications. Bio wastes are eco-friendly starting materials to produce typical nanoparticles with well-defined chemical composition, size, and morphology. Cellulose, starch, chitin and chitosan are the most abundant biopolymers around the world. Cellulose nanoparticles (fibers, crystals and whiskers) can be extracted from agrowaste resources. Chitin is the second most abundant biopolymer after cellulose, it is a characteristic component of the cell walls of fungi, the exoskeletons of arthropods and nanoparticles of chitin (fibers, whiskers) can be extracted from shrimp and crab shells. Starch nano particles can be extracted from tapioca and potato wastes. These nanoparticles can be converted into smart and functional biomaterials by functionalization through chemical modifications due to presence of large amount of hydroxyl group on the surface. The preparation of these nanoparticles includes both series of chemical as well as mechanical treatments; crushing, grinding, alkali, bleaching and acid treatments. Since large quantities of bio wastes are produced annually, further utilization of cellulose, starch and chitins as functionalized materials is very much desired. The cellulose, starch and chitin nano particles are currently obtained as aqueous suspensions which are used as reinforcing additives for high performance environment-friendly biodegradable polymer materials. These nanocomposites are being used as biomedical composites for drug/gene delivery, nano scaffolds in tissue engineering and cosmetic orthodontics. The reinforcing effect of these nanoparticles results from the formation of a percolating network based on hydrogen bonding forces. The incorporation of these nano particles in several bio-based polymers have been discussed. The role of nano particle dispersion, distribution, interfacial adhesion and orientation on the properties of the ecofriendly bio nanocomposites have been carefully evaluated.

Biography

Sabu Thomas is currently the Vice-Chancellor of Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, Kerala, India. He is a Professor at the International and Inter University Centre for Nanoscience and Nanotechnology and Full Professor of Polymer Science and Engineering at the School of Chemical Sciences of Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, Kerala, India. His ground-breaking research has covered the areas of polymer science and engineering, polymer

nanocomposites, elastomers, polymer blends, interpenetrating polymer networks, polymer membranes, green composites and nanocomposites, nanomedicine and green nanotechnology. Prof. Thomas has received several national and international awards in recognition for his work, and recently received Honoris Causa (DSc) from the University of South Brittany, Lorient, France, in recognition for his contributions to polymer science and engineering. Prof. Thomas has published over 1400 peer-reviewed research papers, reviews and book chapters. He has co-edited more than 160 books. Currently he is having an H index of 118.

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