



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**SOLID STATE BIOCONVERSION OF DOMESTIC WASTEWATER
TREATMENT PLANT SLUDGE INTO COMPOST BY SCREENED
FILAMENTOUS FUNGI**

MD. ABUL HOSSAIN MOLLA

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TREATMENT PLANT SLUDGE INTO COMPOST BY SCREENED
FILAMENTOUS FUNGI**

By

MD. ABUL HOSSAIN MOLLA

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

June 2002



*Dedicated
to
Departed Souls... .. ,*

Who always believe once their blossom will flourish



Abstract of the thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

SOLID STATE BIOCONVERSION OF DOMESTIC WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT SLUDGE INTO COMPOST BY SCREENED FILAMENTOUS FUNGI

By

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June 2002

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Similar to other countries, Malaysia is facing problems of safe and environmental friendly disposal of domestic wastewater treatment plant (DWTP) sludge. None of the conventional disposal techniques is recognized as safe and environmental friendly. Solid state bioconversion (SSB) is emerging as a natural promising environmental friendly process. This microbial-based technique of organic wastes bioremediation is gaining greater public acceptance. This study has exploited the SSB technique to rejuvenate the composting process as a remedy for safe disposal and reuse of the Indah Water Konsortium (IWK) DWPT sludge. In this study isolation, screening and selection of compatible mixed fungal culture from relevant sources were followed by optimization of the SSB process. The SSB of IWK DWTP sludge into compost was examined and the compost was tested for crop growth. Six fungal strains *Phanerochaete chrysosporium* 2094, RW-PI 512, *Trichoderma harzianum*^s, *T. harzianum*^c, *Aspergillus versicolor* and *Mucor hiemalis* were identified as sludge acclimatized and non-phytopathogenic among 33 members. The



T. harzianum^s with *P. chrysosporium* 2094 (T/P), and *T. harzianum*^s with *M. hiemalis* (T/M) were selected as the best compatible mixed fungal cultures. Four factors were optimized based on superior production of biomass, total organic carbon (TOC) and soluble protein (SP) for both mixed cultures of SSB of the IWK DWTP sludge. These were C/N ratio 30:1, wheat flour (WF) as a cheap carbon source, pH 4.5 to 5.5 and rice straw (RS) as a bulking material. Higher microbial growth was obtained in RS compared to sawdust (SD) in SSB of the IWK DWTP sludge based on measurement of optical density, soluble protein and glucosamine. Significantly the lowest C/N ratio of 12.14 for T/P and 12.58 for T/M were achieved using RS in composting bin at 75 days. The lowest germination index of 33.43% for T/P and 39.4% for T/M were attained at 30 days. Then it rose to around 90% at 60 days using RS in composting bin. The suitable electrical conductivity (EC dS/m) values of 0.33 for T/P and 0.35 for T/M in SD, 1.41 for T/P and 1.49 for T/M were attained in RS at 75 days. The above facts support the production of stabilized composts. Comparatively, superior composts were produced by T/P around 50-60 days of SSB. Compost could provide 50% N requirement of optimal dose of corn production. Around 65 to 100% higher dry matter production was attained by 50% compost plus 50% N treatment compared to control. Heavy metals uptake were low; whereby the composts of the IWK DWTP sludge contained average 30 times lower than the USA standard limit. The SSB is potentially capable of natural friendly biodegradation of the IWK DWTP sludge into compost with significant reduction of moisture and volume, which have an excellent use for organic farming. It will open a new route of final safe disposal of the IWK DWTP sludge.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

BIO-PENUKARAN KEADAAN PEPEJAL ENAPCEMAR LOJI RAWATAN AIRSISA DOMESTIK KEPADA KOMPOS SECARA PENAPISAN KULAT BERFILAMEN

Oleh

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Malaysia menghadapi masalah pembuangan air sisa enapcemar domestik (DWTP) yang selamat dan mesra alam seperti yang dihadapi oleh negara-negara lain. Tiada teknik pembuangan enapcemar konvensional yang diiktiraf sebagai selamat dan mesra alam. Bio-penukaran keadaan pepejal (SSB) dikenalpasti menjanjikan mesra alam, berdayatahan, dan diterima umum sebagai teknik biorawatan sisa berasaskan mikrob. Satu percubaan telah dibuat untuk mengeksploitasi teknik SSB kepada proses pembuangan yang diubahsuai semula sebagai satu rawatan untuk kaedah pembuangan yang selamat dan diguna semula untuk DWTP Indah Water Konsortium (IWK). Enam jenis fungus yang telah diasingkan iaitu *Phanerochaete chrysosporium* 2094, *Trichoderma harzianum*^s, *T. harzianum*^c, *Aspergillus versicolor* dan *Mucor hiemalis* telah dikenalpasti sebagai bukan pitopatogenik dan mudah disesuaikan dengan keadaan enapcemar dari kalangan 33 ahli. Fungi *T. harzianum*^s dengan *P. chrysosporium* 2094 (T/P) dan *T. harzianum*^s dengan *M. hiemalis* (T/M) merupakan kombinasi kultur campuran yang terbaik. Empat faktor dioptimisasikan untuk penguraian airsisa enapcemar domestik IWK telah dilakukan

berasaskan kepada kelebihan penghasilan biomas, jumlah karbon organik (TOC), dan protein terlarut (SP) bagi kedua-dua kultur campuran. Faktor tersebut adalah nisbah C/N 30:1, tepung gandum (WF) sebagai punca C termurah, nilai pH 4.5 ke 5.5, dan jerami padi (RS) sebagai bahan pencukup. Pertumbuhan organisma yang tinggi diperolehi pada RS berbanding habuk gergaji (SD) dalam penguraian SSB airsisa enapcemar domestik IWK berasaskan kepada penyukatan ketumpatan optikal, protein terlarut, dan glukosamin. Nilai nisbah C/N terendah bererti 12.14 untuk T/P dan 12.58 untuk T/M dicapai dengan menggunakan tong pembuangan pada hari ke 75. Indeks percambahan terendah 33.43% untuk T/P dan 39.4% untuk T/M dicapai pada hari ke 60 menggunakan tong pembuangan. Manakala, nilai EC (dS/m) mencapai 0.33 untuk T/P dan 0.35 untuk T/M dalam SD, 1.41 untuk T/P dan 1.49 untuk T/M dalam RS. Kesemua fakta tersebut menyokong kepada penghasilan SSB yang stabil. Sebagai perbandingan, keputusan terbaik SSB dicapai oleh T/P dalam masa 50-60 hari. Kompos telah mengurangkan sebanyak 50% keperluan N pada dos optimum pengeluaran jagung. Penghasilan bahan kering sebanyak 65 hingga 100% lebih tinggi dicapai dengan penggunaan campuran 50% kompos dengan 50% N berbanding kawalan. Pengambilan logam berat adalah rendah walaupun kompos mengandungi purata 30 kali lebih rendah daripada nilai piawaian USA. Teknik SSB mempunyai pontensi besar dengan menggunakan kaedah semulajadi mesra alam dalam penguraian enapcemar DWTP IWK kepada kompos, dengan pengurangan isipadu dan lembapan yang mana ia boleh digunakan sebagai baja organik untuk kegunaan penanaman organik. Ini merupakan lembaran baru bagi pelupusan terakhir yang selamat bagi enapcemar DWTP IWK.

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I certify that an Examination Committee met on 7th June 2002 to conduct the final examination of Md. Abul Hossain Molla on his Doctor of Philosophy thesis entitled "Solid State Bioconversion of Domestic Wastewater Treatment Plant Sludge into Compost by Screened Filamentous Fungi" in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree Regulation 1981. The Committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the relevant degree. Members of the Examination Committee are as follows:

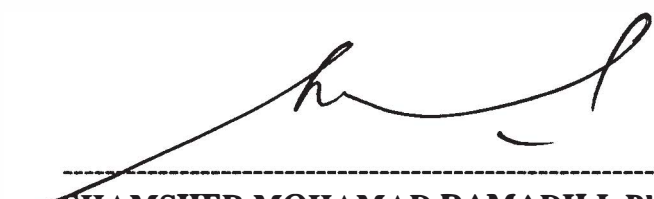
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DECLARATION

I here by declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations, which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or currently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.



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Date: 21 June 2002

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ABSTRAK	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
DECLARATION	xi
LIST OF TABLES	xvii
LIST OF FIGURES	xix
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xxi
CHAPTER	
I INTRODUCTION	1.1
II LITERATURE REVIEW	
2.1 Introduction	2.1
2.2 Wastewater/Sewage Sludge	2.2
2.3 Types of Wastewater Sludge	2.3
2.4 Sludge Characteristics	2.8
2.4.1 Physical Characteristics	2.9
2.4.2 Chemical Characteristics	2.9
2.5 Existing Status of Sludge Managements and Disposal	2.10
2.6 Wastewater Sludge Status in Malaysia	2.18
2.7 Proposed Potential Technique of Sludge Management	2.21
2.8 Solid State Bioconversion	2.23
2.8.1 Physical and Chemical Factors of SSB	2.27
2.8.2 Microbial Factor of SSB	2.29
2.9 Composting and Compost	2.36
2.9.1 Composting Process	2.39
2.9.2 Biochemical Changes in Composting	2.40
2.9.3 Types of Composting	2.43
2.9.4 Factors of Composting Process	2.47
2.9.5 Compost Maturity and Quality	2.53
2.9.6 Effect of Sludge and Compost on Soil and Plant	2.57
2.10 Summary	2.61



III MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1	General Procedures	3.2
3.1.1	Maintenance and Subculture of Fungal Strains/Isolates	3.2
3.1.2	Measurement of pH	3.2
3.1.3	Total Organic Carbon Analysis	3.3
3.1.4	Total Nitrogen Analysis	3.3
3.1.5	Protein Analysis	3.4
3.1.6	Statistical Analysis	3.5
3.2	Isolation, Identification and Screening of Fungi for Solid State Bioconversion of Domestic Wastewater Treatment Plant Sludge	3.5
3.2.1	Sample Collection	3.6
3.2.2	Isolation	3.6
3.2.3	Identification	3.7
3.2.4	Screening	3.8
3.2.5	Parameters Studied	3.11
3.2.6	Experimental Design and Treatments	3.11
3.2.7	Data Analysis	3.12
3.3	In-Vitro Compatibility Evaluation of Mixed Fungal Culture for Solid State Bioconversion of Domestic Wastewater Treatment Plant Sludge	3.12
3.3.1	Fungal Strains	3.12
3.3.2	Preparation of Inoculum and Culture Media	3.13
3.3.3	In-vitro Interactions	3.14
3.3.4	Observations and Measurement	3.15
3.3.5	Interactions Studied Under SEM	3.16
3.3.6	Experimental Design and Treatments	3.16
3.3.7	Data Analysis	3.16
3.4	Optimization of Solid State Bioconversion Process for Domestic Wastewater Treatment Plant Sludge	3.17
3.4.1	Culture of Mixed Fungal Inocula and Inoculation	3.17
3.4.2	Preparation of Culture Media	3.17
3.4.3	Optimization Procedures	3.18
3.4.4	Evaluation of Operational Factors	3.19
3.4.5	Experimental Design and Treatments	3.20
3.4.6	Data Analysis	3.20
3.5	Evaluation of Solid State Bioconversion Process for Composting of IWK Domestic Wastewater Treatment Plant Sludge into Compost	3.20



3.5.1	Sludge and Bulking Materials Collection and Preparation	3.21
3.5.2	Preparation of Mixed Fungal Inocula and Inoculation ..	3.22
3.5.3	Substrate Preparation and Nutrient Used	3.22
3.5.4	Management and Evaluation of SSB Process	3.23
3.5.4.1	Moisture Content	3.24
3.5.4.2	Organic Matter	3.24
3.5.4.3	Total Organic Carbon	3.24
3.5.4.4	Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen	3.24
3.5.4.5	C/N Ratio	3.25
3.5.4.6	Color Intensity of Water Extract	3.25
3.5.4.7	pH of Water Extract	3.25
3.5.4.8	Electrical Conductivity	3.26
3.5.4.9	Germination Index	3.26
3.5.4.10	Protein Assay	3.27
3.5.4.11	Glucosamine Assay	3.27
3.5.4.12	Bulk Density	3.27
3.5.4.13	E ₄ /E ₆ Ratio of Humic Acids	3.28
3.5.4.14	Temperature	3.28
3.5.4.15	Heavy Metals of Compost	3.29
3.5.5	Experimental Design and Treatments	3.29
3.5.6	Data Analysis	3.30
3.6	Evaluation of IWK Domestic Wastewater Treatment Plant Sludge Composts in Corn Growth and Development	3.30
3.6.1	Soil Used for Experiment	3.30
3.6.2	Planting Bag Preparation, Fertilizer and Treatments Application	3.31
3.6.3	Seed Sowing and Crop Management	3.31
3.6.4	Parameters Studied	3.32
3.6.5	Plant Harvest and Chemical Analysis of Plant Samples	3.32
3.6.6	Experimental Design and Treatments	3.33
3.6.7	Data Analysis	3.34

IV RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1	Isolation, Identification and Screening of Fungi for Solid State Bioconversion of Domestic Wastewater Treatment Plant Sludge	4.1
4.1.1	Isolation and Identification	4.1
4.1.2	Screening against IWK DWTP Sludge Supplementation	4.8



	4.1.3	Screening against Seed Germination	4.20
	4.1.4	Summary	4.26
4.2		In-Vitro Compatibility Evaluation of Mixed Fungal Culture for Solid State Bioconversion of Domestic Wastewater Treatment Plant Sludge	4.28
	4.2.1	Consequences of Interactions and Outcomes	4.28
	4.2.2	Summary	4.42
4.3		Optimization of Solid State Bioconversion Process for Domestic Wastewater Treatment Plant Sludge	4.43
	4.3.1	C/N Ratio	4.43
	4.3.2	Source of Carbon Rich Nutrient	4.47
	4.3.3	Initial pH of Culture Substrate	4.50
	4.3.4	Bulking Material for SSB of IWK DWTP Sludge	4.53
	4.3.5	Summary	4.54
4.4		Evaluation of Solid State Bioconversion Process for Composting of IWK Domestic Wastewater Treatment Plant Sludge	4.55
	4.4.1	Moisture Content	4.55
	4.4.2	Organic Matter	4.56
	4.4.3	Total Organic Carbon	4.58
	4.4.4	Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen	4.60
	4.4.5	C/N Ratio	4.62
	4.4.6	Color Intensity of Water Extract	4.64
	4.4.7	pH of Water Extract	4.67
	4.4.8	Electrical Conductivity of Water Extract	4.69
	4.4.9	Germination Index	4.71
	4.4.10	Protein Content in Water Extract	4.73
	4.4.11	Glucosamine in Water Extract	4.75
	4.4.12	Bulk Density	4.77
	4.4.13	E ₄ /E ₆ Ratio of Humic Acids	4.78
	4.4.14	Temperature	4.80
	4.4.15	Heavy Metals in Compost	4.82
	4.4.16	Summary	4.86
4.5		Evaluation of IWK Domestic Wastewater Treatment Plant Sludge Compost in Corn Growth and Development	4.89
	4.5.1	Biometrics Measurements	4.89
	4.5.2	Nutrients Uptake and Heavy Metals Status	4.95
	4.5.3	Summary	4.97



V	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
5.1	Conclusions	5.1
5.2	Recommendations	5.5
	REFERENCES	R.1
	APPENDICES	A.1
	A pH meter and Conductivity meter	A.1
	B Calculations	A.2
	C N-Analyzer	A.6
	D Standard curve for Protein estimation	A.7
	E UVIKON 933 double beam spectrophotometer	A.8
	F Autoclave, and Image Processing and Analytical System	A.9
	G CABI Bioscience Identification Services	A.10
	H Oven and Environmental rotary shaker	A.12
	I Standard plot for Glucosamine estimation	A.13
	J Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer and Hot water bath	A.14
	K SPAD Value	A.15
	BIODATA OF THE AUTHOR	B.1



LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
2.1	Chemical composition of raw and digested sludge 2.10
2.2	Wastewater sludge production and its present and future disposal program in UK 2.16
2.3	Illustrative costs for various sludge disposal options (based on 15,000 ton dry solids/year) 2.17
2.4	Main groups of microorganisms involved in solid state bioconversion 2.30
2.5	Parameters treated as optimum for composting 2.53
2.6	Methods that predict compost maturity 2.56
4.1.1	List and identification of 27 isolated filamentous fungi for the purpose of IWK DWTP sludge bioconversion 4.2
4.1.2	Fungal isolates/strains from different sources used for screening against IWK DWTP sludge supplementation 4.9
4.1.3	Dry cell biomass of 33 fungal strains/isolates at first phase screening against IWK DWTP sludge powder supplementation 4.10
4.1.4	Percent radial growth rate (h^{-1}) of 33 fungal isolates/strains at IWK DWTP sludge powder supplemented culture media 4.11
4.1.5	Selected fungal strains/isolates based on superior adaptation to 15% sludge supplemented condition for further screening against sludge supplementation and seeds germination 4.17
4.1.6	Evaluation of three different crops seeds germination by fungal treatments 4.21
4.1.7	Effect of fungal treatment on radicle length of three crops seeds at 4 day of germination 4.23
4.1.8	Effect of fungal treatment on seedlings (infected/spotted) of three crops seeds after 4 day of germination 4.25
4.2.1	Fifteen different interactions of six fungal strains were grown at 4 cm apart from each other in two culture media 4.30
4.2.2	In-vitro interactions of fast growing fungal strains at day 2 using two culture media 4.31
4.2.3	In-vitro interactions of fast growing fungal strains at day 21 were grown 4 cm apart from each other on PDA and MEA 4.35
4.2.4	Interaction responses of fungal isolate RW-Pl 512 (slow-growing) with fast-growing fungi at day 2 on PDA and MEA 4.38



4.2.5	Interaction responses of slow-growing fungi with fast- and slow-growing fungi at day 21 on PDA and MEA	4.39
4.2.6	Growth responses of <i>Aspergillus versicolor</i> (slow-growing) with fast-growing fungi at day 2 on PDA and MEA	4.41
4.3.1	Effect of C/N ratios on growth parameters of two compatible mixed fungal inocula at domestic wastewater sludge	4.44
4.3.2	Evaluation of six different cheap available, carbon rich substances on growth performance of two compatible mixed fungal	4.49
4.3.3	Growth performance of two compatible mixed fungal inocula at different levels of initial substrate pH	4.51
4.3.4	In-vitro growth parameters of two mixed fungal cultures at six different bulking materials	4.53
4.4.1	Heavy metals status of compost after 75 days of SSB of IWK DWTP sludge	4.84
4.4.2	Physical and chemical properties of IWK wastewater sludge	4.85
4.4.3	Comparative study of composts of IWK DWTP sludge by SSB process with others	4.87
4.5.1	Biometrics measurements of corn (at 45 DAS) influenced by two different composts of IWK DWTP sludge	4.89
4.5.2	Nutritional status of composts from IWK DWTP sludge and standard limits of heavy metals in composts (MSW) of some countries	4.94
4.5.3	Nutrients uptake by corn grown in planting bag (at 45 DAS) using composts of IWK domestic wastewater treatment plant sludge	4.96



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
2.1	Flow chart of different operations of sewerage in sewage treatment plant and sludge production	2.4
2.2	Flow chart of on going sludge treatment operations and its disposal options	2.15
2.3	Sludge treatment flow chart	2.20
2.4	Sewage sludge composting flow chart	2.41
4.1.1	The macro-micro morphological characteristics of seven fungal isolates in PDA growing media under genera of <i>Trichoderma</i> , <i>Penicillium</i> , <i>Aspergillus</i> and <i>Myriodontium</i>	4.7
4.1.2	Growth performance of six fungal isolates on IWK DWTP sludge powder supplemented culture media	4.13
4.1.3	Growth profiles of six fungal strains/isolates at sludge supplemented culture media	4.14
4.1.4	Dry cell biomass of selected ten fungal strains/isolates at second phase of screening up to 25% sludge supplementation	4.18
4.1.5	Growth performance of four fungal strains/isolates up to 25% IWK DWTP sludge supplemented culture media	4.19
4.1.6	Germination of three crops seeds (corn, mung bean and mustard) on direct fungal biomass (FBM) of four filamentous fungi grown on PDA media	4.22
4.2.1	Interaction outcomes of six fungal strains/isolates in two different culture media	4.28
4.2.2	SEM shows the intermingling outcomes of different fungal interactions adjacently grown on PDA media 4 cm apart from each other in 9 cm petri dishes	4.32
4.2.3	Schematic diagram of interactions between two different fungal strains were grown adjacently (4 cm apart) on PDA and MEA ...	4.33
4.2.4	Illustration of interaction outcomes between two different fungal strains/isolates grown on PDA and MEA media 4 cm apart	4.36
4.3.1	Relationship between produced fungal biomass to total organic carbon and soluble protein production in respect of different treatment levels of C/N ratios	4.46
4.3.2	Radial growth rate of two fungal mixed culture at four different situations	4.48



4.4.1	Moisture profiles during SSB of IWK DWTP sludge	4.55
4.4.2	Organic matter profiles during SSB of IWK DWTP sludge	4.57
4.4.3	Total organic carbon changes during SSB of IWK sludge	4.59
4.4.4	Nitrogen dynamic during SSB of IWK DWTP sludge	4.61
4.4.5	Changes in C/N ratio during SSB of IWK DWTP sludge	4.63
4.4.6	Changes in optical density profiles during SSB of IWK DWTP sludge	4.65
4.4.7	Changes in pH during SSB of IWK DWTP sludge	4.68
4.4.8	The electrical conductivity profiles SSB of IWK DWTP sludge ..	4.70
4.4.9	The profiles of germination index during SSB of IWK DWTP sludge	4.72
4.4.10	Changes in soluble protein during SSB of IWK DWTP sludge ..	4.74
4.4.11	Changes in glucosamine during SSB of IWK DWTP sludge	4.76
4.4.12	Changes in bulk density during SSB of IWK DWTP sludge	4.78
4.4.13	Changes in E_4/E_6 ratios of humic acids during SSB of IWK DWTP sludge	4.79
4.4.14	Changes in temperature during SSB of IWK DWTP sludge	4.81
4.4.15	The SSB of IWK DWTP sludge into compost	4.83
4.5.1	A comparison growth and development of corn in planting bag using N fertilizer (urea) vs. composts of IWK DWTP sludge	4.90
4.5.2	Total leaves number and percent dead leaves of corn produced using two composts of IWK DWTP sludge	4.92



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

C	: Carbon
[°] (Superscript)	: Compost (i.e. source of isolation from compost)
CEC	: Cation exchange capacity
C/N	: Carbon Nitrogen ratio
CaF	: Cassava flour
CoF	: Corn flour
CPMAS	: Cross-Polarization Magic-Angle Spinning
DAS	: Days after sowing
DM	: Dry matter
DMRT	: Duncan's Multiple Range Test
DOE	: Department of Environment
DS	: Dry solid
DWTP	: Domestic Wastewater Treatment Plant
EC	: Electrical conductivity
FBM	: Fungal biomass
FDB	: Fungal dry biomass
FM	: Fungal metabolite
FS	: Fixed solid
FTIR	: Fourier-Transform Infrared
GLOX	: Glyoxal Oxidase
IWK	: Indah Water Konsortium Sdn. Bhd.
LSB	: Liquid State Bioconversion
LSD	: Least Significant Difference
LSF	: Liquid State Fermentation
MEA	: Malt extract agar
MF	: Mesocarp fiber
MLSS	: Mixed liquor suspended solid
MSW	: Municipal solid wastes



N	: Nitrogen
NMR	: Nuclear Magnetic Resonance
PDA	: Potato dextrose agar
PME	: Phosphomonoesterase
POME	: Palm Oil Mill Effluent
POTW	: Publicly owned treatment works
RF	: Rice flour
RS	: Rice straw
S	: Sugar (cane)
^s (Superscript)	: Sludge (i.e. source of isolation from sludge)
SC	: Sludge cake
SD	: Sawdust
SF	: Sago flour
SmF	: Submerged fermentation
SP	: Sludge powder or Soluble protein
SSB	: Solid State Bioconversion
SSF	: Solid State Fermentation
STP	: Sewage Treatment Plant
SVI	: Sludge volume index
TDS	: Total dry solid
TOC	: Total organic carbon
T/M	: <i>Trichoderma harzianum</i> ^s with <i>Mucor hiemalis</i>
T/P	: <i>Trichoderma harzianum</i> ^s with <i>Phanerochaete chrysosporium</i> 2094
TS	: Total solid
TSS	: Total suspended solid
TVDS	: Total volatile dry solid
TVSS	: Total volatile suspended solid
VM	: Volatile Matter
VS	: Volatile solid
WF	: Wheat flour



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Global environmental hazard is of grave concern all over the world and its remediation is not only complex but also expensive (Cameron et al., 2000). Continuous pollution due to unavoidable every day operations, such as industrial discharges, domestic sewerage and its disposal, municipal wastes, agricultural and animal husbandry farm wastes, motor industries, and burning of wastes are of main concern. Presently, the problem is more acute in developing countries. Among these various global environmental hazards, sewage sludge is top ranked in waste generation. On an average, a typical person generates over 15 L of sewage sludge per week (Cheremisinoff, 1994) and 50 g of dry solids are produced per capita per day (Hudson, 1995). Its volume increases proportionally with the increasing population in urban areas.

Malaysia is not an exception as aquatic pollution in the urban areas is steadily increasing due to sewage disposal. Here the largest share of total waste volume is also contributed by sewage (64.4%), followed by animal husbandry waste (32.6%), agro based (1.7%) and industrial effluent (1.3%) (DOE, 1996). Presently, Malaysia produces approximately 3 million cubic meters of domestic sewage sludge annually throughout the country that need US\$ 0.3 billion (RM 1 billion) cost for

management (Kadir and Velayutham, 1999). This figure is expected to rise to 7 million cubic meters by the year 2020. The proper management and disposal of this ever-increasing sewage sludge has been treated as one of the prime environmental issues (Zain et al., 2001). As developed countries, Malaysia is also not satisfied with its ongoing management and disposal options such as sludge lagoon, land filling, direct application of liquid slurry and dried sludge to agricultural and forest land, and disposal in swallow trenches, rivers and seas. In Malaysia, existing Sewage Treatment Plants (STP) are far from complete in terms of efficiency and effectiveness if they are evaluated strictly with the Department of Environment (DOE) regulation on sewage generation and disposal. Although no detailed study has been undertaken on the extent of environmental contamination by STP sludge, some information is already available indicating the presence of certain pathogens and bacteria that can adversely impact on the environment. The problem is further compounded by the fact that after few years of operation the quality of the discharge from the STP fails to confirm to the standard of the DOE. It is therefore evident that an alternative treatment system is much needed to replace the existing and conventional ones.

Effective management and environmental friendly disposal of wastewater sludge is a serious problem in every wastewater treatment plant. Environmentally sound and economically viable technology for wastewater sludge management is a great expectation to concerned people. The conventional practices and techniques for wastewater sludge disposal are land filling, dumping, incineration, composting