



Review

Advancement and comparative profiles in the production technologies using solid-state and submerged fermentation for microbial cellulases

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ABSTRACT

There is an increasing demand for cellulases in the market for various applications, among which the bioconversion of lignocellulosic biomass for ethanol production is the major one. Improvements in the titers as well as specific activities of cellulases are highly desired for its use in bioethanol production as well as in other applications. This review deals with developments in bioprocess technologies, solid-state and submerged fermentation as well as on the strategies adopted for improving cellulase production or properties, including engineering the genes or designing enzyme cocktails. It also gives a brief overview of commercially available cellulase preparations.

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1. Introduction

Cellulases are enzymes which hydrolyse the β -1,4-glucosidic linkages of cellulose. They are present in 13 of the 82 glycoside hydrolase families identified by sequence analysis [1]. Cellulases hydrolyze the β -1,4-D-glucan linkages in cellulose and produce as primary products glucose, cellobiose and cello-oligosaccharides. This is the most extensively studied multiple enzyme complex

comprising of endo-glucanases (EG), cellobiohydrolases (CBH) and β -glucosidases (BGL). Endo-glucanases produces nicks in the cellulose polymer exposing reducing and non-reducing ends, cellobiohydrolases acts upon these reducing and non-reducing ends to liberate cello-oligosaccharides and cellobiose units, and β -glucosidases cleaves the cellobiose to liberate glucose, thereby completing the hydrolysis [2]. The complete cellulase system comprising CBH, EG and BGL components thus acts synergistically to convert crystalline cellulose to glucose.

Cellulases are currently the third largest industrial enzyme worldwide, by dollar volume, because of their wide applications in cotton processing; paper recycling, in juice extraction, as deter-

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gent enzymes and animal feed additives. However, cellulases may become the largest volume industrial enzyme, if ethanol from lignocellulosic biomass through enzymatic route becomes a major transportation fuel.

There has been an increased interest worldwide for an alternate source of sustainable fuel due to the limited reserves of fossil fuel. Ethanol from lignocellulosic biomass appears promising, as the raw material is ubiquitous, abundant and could play a major role in green house gas reduction. It has been stated that 10% blend of bioethanol with gasoline would reduce the carbon dioxide emission by 3–6%, which makes bioethanol a cleaner fuel in addition to being a renewable alternative to petroleum [3]. Ethanol production from lignocellulosic biomass through the biological route seems very attractive and sustainable due to several reasons among which the renewable and ubiquitous nature of biomass and its non-competitiveness with food crops are the major ones. About 2.9×10^3 million tons of lignocellulosic residues are available from cereal crops and 3×10^3 million tons from pulse and oil seed crops. Also 5.4×10^2 million tons is produced annually from plantation crops worldwide [4]. Lignocellulosic biomass accounts for 50% of all the biomass available in the world asserting its potential as a feasible raw material for ethanol production. Bioconversion of cellulosic biomass employing cellulases to produce ethanol is foreseen as the most important application of this enzyme. The major limitation in developing a feasible lignocellulose-to-ethanol technology is the high cost and low titers of cellulase production.

There are a wide variety of microorganisms involved in cellulase production including aerobic and anaerobic bacteria [5–8]; white rot and soft rot fungi [9–11] and anaerobic fungi [12,13]. In filamentous fungi, actinomycetes and in aerobic bacteria, cellulases are mostly secreted as free molecules. Most of the cellulases exploited for industrial applications are from filamentous fungi such as *Trichoderma*, *Penicillium*, *Fusarium*, *Humicola*, *Phanerochaete*, etc., where a large number of cellulases are encountered [11,14–17]. Though the filamentous growth form causes difficulties in mass transfer compared to yeast or bacterial growth, efficient technologies have been developed for antibiotic, organic acid and native enzyme production from filamentous fungi [18]. These filamentous fungi produce cellulase complexes with all the three classes of enzymes at different proportion needed for the complete hydrolysis of cellulose. *Trichoderma reesei* is one among the most potent cellulase producers studied in detail. It produces two cellobiohydrolases (CBH I and CBH II) and the two endo-glucanases (EG1 and EG2), in a rough proportion of 60:20:10:10, which together can make up to 90% of the enzyme cocktail; while seven β -glucosidases-BGLI-BGLVII secreted by this fungus typically makes up less than 1% [19–21].

2. Cellulase market scenario

The demand for cellulases is consistently on the rise due to its diverse applications. There are several companies involved in cellulase production for textile detergent, paper industries and other industries. Globally, there are two major players known for cellulase production for biomass conversion—“Genencor” and “Novozyme”. Both the companies has played a significant role in bringing down the cost of cellulase several folds by their active research and are continuing to bring down the cost by adopting novel technologies. Recently, Genencor has launched Accelerase[®] 1500, a cellulase complex intended specifically for lignocellulosic biomass processing industries [22]. It is claimed to be more cost-effective and efficient for bioethanol industries than its predecessor—Accelerase[®] 1000. Accelerase[®] 1500 is produced with a genetically modified strain of *T. reesei*. This enzyme preparation is claimed to contain higher levels of β -glucosidase activity than all

other commercial cellulases available today, so as to ensure almost complete conversion of cellobiose to glucose [22].

Genencor has also launched Accelerase[®] XY accessory xylanase enzyme complex that enhances both xylan (C5) and glucan (C6) conversion when blended with other Accelerase[®] enzyme products [22]. Similarly, Accelerase[®] XC is an accessory xylanase/cellulase enzyme complex that contains a broad profile of hemicellulase and cellulase activities and enhances both xylan (C5) and glucan (C6) conversion when blended with other Accelerase[®] enzyme products [22]. Also, Accelerase[®] BG is an accessory β -glucosidase enzyme that enhances glucan (C6) conversion when blended with cellulase products [22]. There are several potential cellulases which may prove to be effective for biomass hydrolysis when supplemented with β -glucosidase, indicating the importance of Accelerase[®] BG.

Novozymes also have a diverse range of cellulase preparations available based on application as Cellusoft[®] AP and Cellusoft[®] CR for bioblasting in textile mills, Carezyme[®] and Celluclean for laundry in detergent, Denimax[®] 6011 for stonewash industry at low temperature as well as many others specific for particular application [23]. Novozyme also announced the availability of cellulase preparation specifically for biomass hydrolysis last year, though no information is available on the source of production as well as availability in the market. Amano Enzyme Inc. in Japan and MAP's India in India are another enzyme industry actively involved in cellulase production.

Though, most of the enzyme producing companies worldwide is involved in production and marketing of cellulases for diverse applications, there are very few of them who develop cellulases for biomass conversion, the most successful of them probably being Genencor and Novozyme.

Table 1 shows the major players marketing cellulases with different trademark and their source of origin, most of which may be genetically modified strains.

3. Cellulases for bioconversion

Microbial cellulases find applications in a variety of industries where cellulases of varying degrees of purity are desired. Though cellulases were initially investigated several decades back for the bioconversion of biomass, this later became unattractive and the other industrial applications of the enzyme as in animal feed, food, textiles and detergents and in the paper industry were predominantly pursued [24]. However, with the shortage of fossil fuels and the arising need to find alternative sources for renewable energy and fuels, there is a renewal of interest in the bioconversion of lignocellulosic biomass using cellulases and other enzymes.

The performance of cellulase mixtures in biomass conversion processes depends on several of its properties including stability, product inhibition, synergism among the different enzymes, productive binding to the cellulose, physical state as well as the composition of cellulosic biomass [25]. Cellulases are available in the market under different names or trademark for different applications which could also be tried for biomass hydrolysis. Nieves et al. [26] and Kabel et al. [27] analyzed and evaluated the potential of several commercial cellulases for biomass conversion. They performed the standard assays for different enzymes as Filter Paper Activity (FPU), CMCase, β -glucosidase and xylanase. It would not be feasible to predict the efficiency of cellulases for bioconversion on the basis of standard assays, as there are no clear relationships between cellulase activities on soluble substrates and those on insoluble substrates [28]. So the soluble substrates should not be used to predict the efficiency of cellulases for processing relevant solid substrates, such as plant cell walls. The choice of the enzyme preparation for a particular biomass would be more dependent on biomass characteristics rather than on standard enzyme activities measured [27]. Preparations having higher FPUs are desirable

Table 1
Commercial cellulases produced by companies and their sources.

Enzyme samples	Supplier	Source
Cellubrix (Celluclast)	Novozymes, Denmark	<i>T. longibrachiatum</i> and <i>A. niger</i>
Novozymes 188	Novozymes	<i>A. niger</i>
Cellulase 2000L	Rhodia-Danisco (Vinay, France)	<i>T. longibrachiatum</i> / <i>T. reesei</i>
Rohament CL	Rohm-AB Enzymes (Rajamaki, Finland)	<i>T. longibrachiatum</i> / <i>T. reesei</i>
Viscostar 150L	Dyadic (Jupiter, USA)	<i>T. longibrachiatum</i> / <i>T. reesei</i>
Multifect CL	Genencor Intl. (S. San Francisco, CA)	<i>T. reesei</i>
Bio-feed beta L	Novozymes	<i>T. longibrachiatum</i> / <i>T. reesei</i>
Energex L	Novozymes	<i>T. longibrachiatum</i> / <i>T. reesei</i>
Ultraflo L	Novozymes	<i>T. longibrachiatum</i> / <i>T. reesei</i>
Viscozyme L	Novozymes	<i>T. longibrachiatum</i> / <i>T. reesei</i>
Cellulyve	50L Lyven (Colombelles, France)	<i>T. longibrachiatum</i> / <i>T. reesei</i>
GC 440	Genencor-Danisco (Rochester, USA)	<i>T. longibrachiatum</i> / <i>T. reesei</i>
GC 880	Genencor	<i>T. longibrachiatum</i> / <i>T. reesei</i>
Spezyme CP	Genencor	<i>T. longibrachiatum</i> / <i>T. reesei</i>
GC 220	Genencor	<i>T. longibrachiatum</i> / <i>T. reesei</i>
Accelerase®1500	Genencor	<i>T. reesei</i>
Cellulase AP30K	Amano Enzyme	<i>A. niger</i>
Cellulase TRL	Solvay Enzymes (Elkhart, IN)	<i>T. reesei</i> / <i>T. Longibrachiatum</i>
Econase CE	Alko-EDC (New York, NY)	<i>T. reesei</i> / <i>T. Longibrachiatum</i>
Cellulase TAP106	Amano Enzyme (Troy, VA)	<i>T. viride</i>
Biocellulase TRI	Quest Intl. (Sarasota, FL)	<i>T. reesei</i> / <i>T. Longibrachiatum</i>
Biocellulase A	Quest Intl.	<i>A. niger</i>
Ultra-low microbial (ULM)	Iogen (Ottawa, Canada)	<i>T. reesei</i> / <i>T. Longibrachiatum</i>

for bioconversion, since filter paper is highly crystalline cellulose, the degradation of which depends on the combination of activities of EG and CBH, where the EG create new chain ends for the CBH to split off cellobiose which further get attacked by BGL to give glucose [29,30]. Preparations of cellulase from a single organism may not very efficient for hydrolysis of a particular feed stock. Though, the filamentous fungi are the major source of cellulases and hemicellulases and the mutant strains of *Trichoderma* including *T. reesei*, *T. viride* and *T. longibrachium* are the best known producers of the enzyme, it is also well known that these species of *Trichoderma* have a low level of β -glucosidase activity [31]. Cellulases for biomass conversion could be a blend or enzyme cocktail containing endo- and exo-cellulase, xylanase, β -glucosidase, pectinase, etc. which could vary for different biomass on the basis of their composition. The hydrolytic efficiency of a multi-enzyme complex for lignocellulose saccharification depends both on properties of individual enzymes and their ratio in the multi-enzyme cocktail [32]. The ideal cellulase complex must be highly active on the intended biomass feedstock, able to completely hydrolyze the biomass, operate well at mildly acidic pH, withstand process stress, and be cost-effective [33]. The success of any lignocellulosic ethanol project will depend on the ability to develop such cellulase systems. The key to developing cellulases those are effective towards a particular biomass feedstock is to artificially construct them either by enzyme assembly to form cocktails or to engineer the cellulase producers to express desired combination of cellulase enzymes [1]. Both these approaches have been tried with success. Enzyme cocktails have been developed by mixing *T. reesei* cellulase with other enzymes including xylanases, pectinases and β -glucosidases, and these cocktails were tried for hydrolysis of various feed stock [34,35]. One of the recent examples of cocktails developed, include the multi-enzyme complex developed based on highly active *Chrysosporium lucknowense* cellulases [32].

Characterization of cellulases has been achieved to a considerable extent by site-directed mutagenesis [28]. These studies as well as X-ray crystallography of the enzymes [28] have led to the identification and characterization of putative catalytic and binding residues, and the trapping of enzyme–substrate complexes. Nevertheless, understanding the mechanism of degradation of the natural substrate-crystalline cellulose remains a great challenge [2].

There are several challenges which have yet to be overcome, for example the recalcitrance of lignocellulosic biomass, which necessitates the pretreatment step to open up the fibers and decrease the crystallinity of cellulose, which again add to the cost of lignocellulosic–ethanol technology. Pretreatment methods also need to vary from biomass to biomass based on their compositional characteristic [36]. For developing an economically feasible technology, the use of cheaper raw material as a substrate for cellulase production could bring down the production costs [2]. Also eliminating the steps in downstream processing of the enzyme for bioconversion might help to bring down the cost of cellulases as would be other approaches like improving the specific activities, temperature and low pH tolerance as well as engineering the organism for improved production.

Most of the commercial cellulases available are produced from *T. reesei* and *Aspergillus niger* but *T. reesei* lack sufficient amount of β -glucosidase to perform a proper and complete hydrolysis [32]. Thus, the cellobiose accumulated due to an incomplete conversion caused by the limiting amounts of β -glucosidase inhibits exo- and endo-glucanases [2]. β -Glucosidases are also subject to product inhibition by the glucose beyond certain levels that vary between the different preparations and sources of the enzyme. One way to solve this issue is to add a glucose tolerant β -glucosidase to the reaction mixture containing other cellulase components and to employ this cocktail for biomass hydrolysis which would increase the efficiency of hydrolysis [2]. There are several reports available where an enzyme cocktail has been employed successfully for biomass conversion [28,37–39].

3.1. Desirable characteristics of the cellulase preparations for bioconversion

Lot of specific features, such as higher catalytic efficiency on insoluble cellulosic substrates, increased stability at elevated temperature and at a certain pH, and higher tolerances to end-product inhibition are desirable in cellulases for biomass conversion [40]. Acidic cellulases are usually more desirable for bioconversion since in situations where acidic pretreatment of biomass is employed or when the enzyme has to work in cocktail with *T. reesei* enzymes whose optimal activity is in the close to 5, a pH range of 4–6 is preferred. Most of the cellulases tried or recommended or for bioconversion perform better at pH range 4–6. Accelerase®1500 has

Table 2
List of the cellulase activity (FPase), protein and properties of commercial enzymes on the basis of information available at the company site or otherwise on the basis of information available in the research articles.

Enzymes	Cellulase activity (FPase/ml)	Protein (mg/ml)	Use pH	Temperature (°C)	Form available
Celluclast	56	122	5.0	50	Liquid
Novozymes 188	<5	168	5.0	50	Liquid
Cellulase 2000L	10	48	5.0	50	Liquid
Rohament CL	50	152	5.0	50	Liquid
Viscostar 150L	33	163	5.0	50	Liquid
Multifect CL	64	153	5.0	50	Liquid
Bio-feed beta L	<5	29	5.0	50	Liquid
Energex L	<5	222	4.5	50	Liquid
Ultraflo L	<5	32	5.0	50	Liquid
Viscozyme L	<5	29	5.0	50	Liquid
Cellulyve	24	105	5.0	50	Liquid
GC 440	<5	118	5.0	50	Liquid
GC 880	<5	162	5.0	50	Liquid
Spezyme CP	49	135	4.0	50	Liquid
GC 220	116	211	5.0	50	Liquid
Accelerase® 1500	NA	NA	4.0–5.0	50–65	Liquid
Cellulase AP30K	0.17	6 ^a	4.5	60	Powder
Cellulase TRL	95	167	4.5	50	Powder
Econase CE	40	95	5.0	50	Liquid
Cellulase TAP106	0.42	3.3 ^a	5.0	50	Powder
Biocellulase TRI	68	279	4.5	50	Liquid
Biocellulase A	0.29	23 ^a	5.0	55	Powder
Ultra-low microbial (ULM)	88	184	NA	NA	Liquid
Cazy GH5	2200 ^b	2 ^c	7.5	50	Liquid
Cazy GH 8	2400 ^b	2 ^c	7.0	60	Liquid

Filter paper units determined according to IUPAC method; pH 5.0 and 50 °C.

^a Powder preparations were made to 2% w/v and equilibrated for 96 h in 50 mM acetate pH 4.8.

^b One unit is defined as the amount of enzyme required to release 1 μmol of glucose-reducing-sugar equivalents per minute from barley β-glucan in 50 mM phosphate buffer, pH 7.0, at 60 °C, where reducing sugars are measured by the method of Miller. Protein has been determined by using the Pierce BSA assay.

^c Protein determination method is not available.

an optimal pH of 4.6–5.0 but it gets inactivated below 4.0 or above pH 7.0. Usually 50 °C temperature is employed for hydrolysis by cellulases [39], even Accelerase® 1500 works well at temperature ranging from 50 to 65 °C though at lower ends of the temperature range, the effective life time of enzyme is higher. Most of the filamentous fungi such as *T. reesei* and *A. niger* produce acidic cellulases, which are suitable for biomass hydrolysis. Some of the important features of commercially available cellulases with potential to be used in biomass conversion are listed in Table 2.

4. Advancement in research in bioprocess of cellulases

Cellulase production is a major area of research globally, and with the rejuvenated interest created due their applications in lignocellulose conversion, several investigators worldwide are working on some aspect of cellulase [2]. Production of low titers of cellulase has always been a major concern and thus several workers are trying to improve the production titers by adopting multifaceted approaches, which include the use of better bioprocess technologies, using cheaper or crude raw materials as substrates for enzyme production, bioengineering the microorganisms, etc. [2,19]. A significant portion of research tries to address the bioprocess improvement strategies for enhancing the yield and specific activities of cellulases. Sukumaran et al. [2] in their review has discussed the bioprocess technologies employed for cellulase production using diverse microorganisms and the future challenges. Majority of the reports on microbial production of cellulases utilizes the submerged fermentation technology (SmF) and the widely studied organism used in cellulase production—*T. reesei* has also been tested mostly in liquid media. However, in nature, the growth and cellulose utilization of aerobic microorganisms elaborating cellulases probably resembles solid-state fermentation than a liquid culture [41,42]. During last two decades solid-state fermentation has regained interest due to the high titers of enzyme production employing fungal cultures [43]. The lignocellulosic substrate type

had the greatest impact on cellulase secretion. Some of the substrates significantly stimulated lignocellulolytic enzyme synthesis without supplementation of the culture medium with specific inducers [44]. Nevertheless, the advantages of better monitoring and handling are still associated with the submerged cultures [15].

Currently used bioprocesses and the status of cellulase production based on literature are provided in Table 3. A direct comparison of the cellulase yields and activities in these reports are impossible due to the differences in the methods of assay and the way the activities are being expressed despite the fact that there is an IUPAC approved method of assay for cellulase activity determination [45]. Moreover, there is no way of comparing cellulases produced by SSF and SmF directly.

4.1. Solid-state fermentation

Solid-state fermentation (SSF) is defined as the fermentation in absence or near absence of free water [46]. SSF for production of cellulases is rapidly gaining interest as a cost-effective technology as the microorganisms, especially fungal cultures produces comparatively high titers of cellulase due to the conditions of fermentation which shows similarity to the natural environment [47,48]. Filamentous fungi as *T. reesei*, *A. niger*, *Penicillium* sp., etc. have been employed for cellulase production using solid-state fermentation where a basal mineral salts medium was used for moistening the substrate. Chahal [49] had reported a higher yield of cellulases from *T. reesei* in SSF cultures compared to liquid cultures. Tengerdy [50] compared cellulase production in SmF and SSF systems and had indicated that there was about a 10-fold reduction in the production cost when SSF is employed for production. Solid-state cultures are strongly recommended as systems for producing cellulases at lower price than submerged cultures [51] as the product concentration remains quite higher thereby reducing the step in downstream processing, in turn reducing the cost of operation. Nigam and Singh [52] have reviewed the use of agricultural wastes as substrates for

Table 3
Types of bioprocesses and substrate involved for cellulase production.

Microorganism	Substrate	Method	Magnitude	Enzymes: activity	Reference (s)
<i>Trichoderma citrinoviride</i>	NA	SmF	Shake flask	FPase 0.63 IU/ml, Endoglucanase 3.12 IU/ml, β -glucosidase 8.22 IU/ml, Cellobiase 1.94 IU/ml	[105]
<i>Penicillium citrinum</i>	Wheat bran	SSF	Shake flask	FPase 1.72 IU/ml Endoglucanase 1.89 IU/ml	[54]
<i>Acremonium cellulolytius (CF-2612)</i>	Solka-folk	SmF	2-l jar fermenter	240.3 FPU/l/h (346.0 FPU/g carbohydrate)	[61]
<i>Aspergillus niger A 20</i>	Cellulose	SmF	Shake flask	Cellobiase 27.5 U/ml	[106]
<i>Bacillus pumilus</i>	CM cellulose/glycerol	SmF	SF	CMCase 1.9 U/ml, Cellobiase 1.2 U/ml	[107]
<i>Bacillus sp KSM N252</i>	Carboxymethyl cellulose	SmF	Shake flask	CMCase 0.17 U/mg protein	[108]
<i>Chaetomium thermophilium CT2</i>	Cellulose (sigma cell)	SmF	Shake flask	CMCase 2.7 IU/ml	[109]
<i>Melnocarpus albomyces</i>	Solka-Floc	SmF	700-l fermentor	Cellulase 1160 ECU/ml, Endoglucanase 3290 ECU/ml,	[110]
<i>Mucor circinelloidens</i>	Lactose	SmF	Shake flask	EGL 0.25 U/ml	[111]
<i>Neurospora crassa</i>	Wheat straw	SmF	Shake flask	FPase 1.33 U/ml, CMCase 19.7 U/ml, BGL 0.58 U/ml	[112]
<i>Penicillium janthinellum</i>	Sugar cane bagasse	SmF	Shake flask	FPase 0.55 U/ml, CMCase 21.5 U/ml, BGL 2.3 IU/ml	[113]
<i>Phaenerocheate chrysosporium</i>	Cellulose (Avicell)	SmF	100-l fermentor	Cellulase 29 mg/g cellulose	[69]
<i>Rhodothermus marinus</i>	CM cellulose	SmF	150-l fermentor	Endoglucanase 97.7 U/ml	[114]
<i>Streptomyces sp T3-1</i>	Carboxymethyl cellulose	SmF	50-l fermentor	CMCase 148 IU/ml, Avicellase 45 IU/ml, BGL 137 IU/ml	[115]
<i>Streptomyces drozdowiczii</i>	Wheat bran	SmF	Shake flask	CMCase 595 U/l	[116]
<i>Thermotoga maritima</i>	Xylose	SmF	Shake flask	Cellobiase 11 mU/ml, Avicellase 0.3 mU/ml Beta-glucosidase 30 mU/ml	[117]
<i>Trichoderma reesei</i>	Steam treated willow	SmF	22-l fermentor	FPase 108 U/g cellulose	[71]
<i>Trichoderma reesei RUT C30</i>	Cellulose (Avicell)	SmF	Microbubble dispersion bioreactor	FPase 1.8 U/ml	[118]
<i>Trichoderma reesei RUT C30</i>	Corrugated cardboard	SmF	30-l fermentor	FPase 2.27 U/ml	[119]
<i>Trichoderma reesei ZU-02</i>	Corn Stover Residue	SmF	30-l fermentor	Cellulase 5.48 IU/ml, FPase 0.25 U/ml	[120]
<i>Trichoderma viridae</i>	Sugar cane bagasse	SmF	Shake flask	FPase 0.88 U/ml, CMCase 33.8 U/ml, BGL 0.33 U/ml	[113]
<i>Penicillium occitanis</i>	Paper pulp	SmF-fed-batch	20-l fermentor	FPase 23 IU/ml, CMCase 21 IU/ml	[59]
<i>Trichoderma reesei</i>	Xylose/sorbose	SmF-continuous	Bioreactor	FPase 0.69 U/ml/h	[63]
<i>Aspergillus niger NRRL3</i>	Wheat Bran/Corn cob	SSF	Flask	Cellobiase 215 IU/g, cellulose	[121]
<i>Bacillus subtilis</i>	Banana waste	SSF	Shake flask	FPase 2.8 IU/gds, CMCase 9.6 IU/gds, Cellobiase 4.5 IU/gds	[122]
<i>Bacillus subtilis</i>	Soybean industry residue	SSF	Cylindrical bioreactor	FPase 1.08 U/mg protein	[72]
<i>Mixed culture: Trichoderma reesei,</i>	Rice Chaff/Wheat Bran (9:1)	SSF	Flask	FPase 5.64 IU/g	[123]
<i>Aspergillus niger</i>					
<i>Penicillium decumbans</i>	Wheat straw/bran (8:2)	SSF	SSF bioreactor	Fpase 20.4 IU/g	[124]
<i>Thermoascus auranticus</i>	Wheat straw	SSF	Perforated drum bioreactor	FPase 4.4 U/gds, CBH 2.8 U/gds, Endoglucanase 987 U/gds, BGL 48.8 U/gds	[125]
<i>Trichoderma reesei ZU 02</i>	Corn cob residue	SSF	Tray fermentor	FPase 158 U/gds	[126]
<i>Trichoderma reesei RUT C30</i>	Wheat bran	SSF	Shake flask	3.8 U/gds FPU	[127]

NA = not available.
(Sukumaran et al. [2]).

cellulolytic enzyme production under SSF and strongly believe that with the appropriate technology, improved bioreactor design, and operation controls, SSF may become a competitive method for the production of cellulases. The review by Pandey et al. [53] on SSF for industrial enzyme production also describes the application of the technology for cellulase production. SSF can thus be considered as a future technology for commercial production of cellulases considering the low cost input and ability to utilize naturally available sources of cellulose as substrate. Cellulases produced in solid-state culture shows remarkable stability towards temperature, pH, metal ions, etc. Dutta et al. [54] claimed the cellulase produced by SSF employing *Penicillium citrini* showed tolerance to alkali for the first time. SSF proves to be efficient technology for cellulase production for bioconversion, since purity is not very stringent necessity for this application, and a concentrated enzyme preparation would serve the purpose. It has also been reported that the enzyme produced using the same biomass as to be used for bioconversion

proves more efficient than the one produced on other cellulosic substrate [19].

Optimization of SSF conditions for production, when attempted may still improve the overall production economics and also make it an attractive technology for cellulase production. It offers many advantages over SmF, including high volumetric productivity, higher concentration of products, less effluent generation, and low catabolic repression which makes it a promising technology in near future [43].

4.2. Submerged fermentation

Submerged fermentation has been defined as fermentation in the presence of excess water. Almost all the large-scale enzyme producing facilities are using the proven technology of SmF due to better monitoring and ease of handling. Though bacteria and actinomycetes are also reported for cellulase production, the titers

are very low to make the technology economically feasible. Most of the commercial cellulases are produced by the filamentous fungi—*T. reesei* or *A. niger* under SmF [6,55]. Cellulase production in cultures is highly influenced by various parameters including the nature of the cellulosic substrate, pH of the medium, nutrient availability, inducer supplementation, fermentation temperature, etc., and a large-scale production of cellulases requires understanding and proper controlling of the growth and enzyme production capabilities of the producer. Cellulases produced by compost organisms such as the filamentous fungi—*Trichoderma*, *Penicillium*, *Aspergillus*, *Humicola*, etc., can perform at diverse ranges of pH and temperature. The media formulation for fermentation is of significant concern since no general composition can give the optimum growth and cellulase production. Also the media used are mostly specific for the organism concerned. In *T. reesei*, a basal medium after Mandels and Reese [56] or Mandel and Weber [57] has been most frequently used with or without modifications. However, several of these media are extremely complicated since many factors and their interactions can affect cellulase productivity [58].

Microbial cellulases are subject to induction and repression mechanisms and the process design and media formulation for cellulase production has to take care of these aspects. Among the known inducers of cellulase genes, lactose is considered to be the only economically feasible additive in industrial fermentation media [21]. Though majority of the processes described are batch processes, there have been attempts to produce cellulase in fed-batch with improved enzyme production [59–61], or continuous mode [62–64], which supposedly helps to override the repression caused by the accumulation of reducing sugar. Increased fermentation time with a low productivity has been the major technical limitation in fermentative production of cellulases since long. A two-stage continuous process for cellulase production could be employed in which the growth phase and production phase was separated by different pH and temperature optima. This has been described as early as 1979 [65]. Repression by glucose and cellobiose are known features of cellulase systems and several attempts have been directed towards development of mutants resistant to catabolite repression [66,67]. Cellulases of *T. reesei* are inducible enzymes and best activities were reported when grown in medium containing cellulose. Mostly, pure cellulose preparations like Solka-Floc and Avicell has been used in the liquid cultures of cellulolytic microbes for production of the enzymes and natural cellulosic materials when used as the carbon source gave poor enzyme yields [68]. While using soluble substrates, the break down products may hamper cellulase synthesis by promoting catabolite repression due to accumulation of free sugars. The carbon sources in majority of the commercial cellulase fermentations are cellulosic biomass ranging from pure cellulose to straw, spent hulls of cereals and pulses, rice or wheat bran, bagasse, paper industry waste, dairy manure and various other lignocellulosic residues [60,69–73]. Increased production in fermenters may be achieved by a gradient feed of a suitable cellulose and maintenance of process conditions at their optimal [61]. Most of these are capable of inducing the cellulase system in fungi often at par with the known inducers or sometimes even better [15].

Cellulases produced by SSF add SmF have been listed in Table 3.

4.3. Morphological/growth relationship with cellulase production

Cellulase production in cultures is growth associated. Filamentous fungi have the tendency to grow adhered to surfaces and the influence of this type of growth on fungal physiology has not yet been thoroughly studied, particularly when related to productivity [74]. Under natural conditions, fungal contact with surfaces is required for nutrient uptake, enzyme secretion and hyphal apical

growth. Filamentous fungi can grow to significant extent in the absence of free water [75]. Considering that submerged free floating fungal growth is not natural, growth on and within solid substrates is fundamentally related to cell adhesion. Growth morphology of filamentous fungi is an important parameter related to productivity of several industrial processes. Though favorable physiological aspects are shared with solid-state fermentation, fungal biofilms present better possibilities for process control and scale-up [74]. Importance of morphology in the productivity of fungal submerged processes, placing biofilms in a preferential category has been elucidated by Villena and Gutierrez-Correa [74]. Fungal biofilms are morphologically efficient systems for enzyme production. In several fungal species, principally those that adhere through adhesive production, adhesion can be considered as a metabolically active process [76,77] involving signaling and differential gene expression mechanisms [78]. A clear relationship between morphology and productivity has not yet been established [79]. Since, fungal morphology influences the productivity of fungal fermentations; it is of major importance to know the fungal behavior during culture for cellulase production. Fermentation medium component as well as physico-chemical factors could be responsible for variation in morphology. Even the addition of different buffer system with varied concentration; influence the fungal morphology, which shows a clear transition from clumped to pelleted forms in cultures [80]. Fungal growth as well as morphology can be strongly correlated to cellulase production.

5. Engineered/artificial cellulases

Though several filamentous fungi are capable of cellulase production, the yield of the enzyme and the levels of individual cellulase components are not often satisfactory for commercialization. Improvements in cellulase titers as well as the ability to tailor the ratios of endo- and exo-glucanases and β -glucosidase produced by organisms are highly desired for biomass conversion. Very relevant information related to cellulase gene regulation was revealed more than a decade ago as obvious from the publications. A recent publication on the study of *T. reesei* genome [81] revealed that despite being the best known producer of cellulases; the genome of the fungus contains fewer cellulases and hemicellulases than any other sequenced fungi. Authors could not find any deep insight into the highly efficient protein secretion machinery in the fungus. This work has tremendous implications in the understanding the genetics of this important organism, and also would enable improved production processes critical to reducing the cost of biomass conversion.

T. reesei and other filamentous fungi produce non-complexed cellulases. Cellulase engineering for non-complexed cellulase systems contains three major research directions: (1) rational design for each cellulase, based on knowledge of the cellulase structure and the catalytic mechanism [1,82]; (2) expression cassette and directed evolution for each cellulase, in which the improved enzymes or ones with new properties were selected after random mutagenesis and/or molecular recombination [55,83–85]; and (3) the reconstitution of cellulase cocktails active on insoluble cellulosic substrates, yielding an improved hydrolysis rate or higher cellulose digestibility [39,86–89]. Improvements in specific cellulase activities for non-complexed cellulase mixtures can be implemented through cellulase engineering based on rational design or directed evolution for each component of cellulase, as well as its reconstitution [90].

Artificial cellulase designing appears to open a new avenue to this field and seems to be more promising for creating cellulases with desired features. Highly thermostable class II cellobiohydrolase (CBH II) chimeras were developed by structure guided recombination of three fungal class II cellobiohydrolase (CBH II)

[25]. Increasing the thermostability and improvement in activity of CBH II were two major goals. Optimized mixtures of cellulase for biomass conversion could be formulated once inventories of stable cellulases are available.

Site-directed mutagenesis have tremendous opportunities for introducing desired characteristics to the enzymes acting on soluble substrates, but cellulases with its complex insoluble and heterogeneous substrate–cellulose is relatively difficult to manipulate [1]. Among the several reasons for this challenge is the unexplained dynamic interaction between the cellulose binding domain (CBD) and the catalytic domain [25]. Still there are several excellent reviews which summarize numerous studies using site-directed mutagenesis for investigating cellulase mechanisms and improving enzyme properties [1,82].

Baker et al. reported a 20% improvement in the activity on microcrystalline cellulose of a modified endoglucanase Cel5A from *Acidothermus cellulolyticus* [91]. The Cel5A endoglucanase, whose high-resolution crystallographic structure has been available, was subjected to a series of mutations designed to alter the chemistry of the product-leaving side of the active site cleft. A mutant (Y245G) was shown to increase K_i of cellobiose by 15-fold, by substitution of a non-aromatic residue at site 245. However, today there are no general rules for site-directed mutagenesis strategies for improving cellulase activity on solid cellulose substrates and it still remains in a trial-and-test process [28].

Potent cellulase genes from filamentous fungi such as, *Trichoderma* and *Aspergillus* can be isolated, cloned and expressed in fungal hosts to get better combination or synergism. The cellobiohydrolase I (CBH I) promoter of *T. reesei* is a highly efficient known promoter with unusually high rate of expression under cellulase induction conditions and has been used to drive the expression of β -glucosidase [92] and endoglucanase [93] thereby improving the cellulase profile of the host strain. The promoter has also been used to drive the expression of various homologous and heterologous proteins in *Trichoderma* [94,95]. Glucose repression of cellulase genes has been addressed by using a truncated CBH I promoter lacking binding sites for the carbon catabolite repressor CRE1 [96]. Another major strategy employed for improving cellulase production in presence of glucose is to use promoters that are insensitive to glucose repression. Nakari-Setälä and Penttillä [97] had used the promoters of transcription elongation factors *1 α* and *tef1*, and that of an unidentified cDNA (*cDNA1*) for driving the expression of endoglucanase and cellobiohydrolase in *T. reesei* with the result of de-repression of these enzymes. These studies indicate that proper engineering of sequences to obtain expression of proteins from *cbh1* promoter and manipulations of the promoter to abolish repression can dramatically improve production of the cloned protein.

The cellulase system of *T. reesei* as well as of several other fungi is limited by the relatively lesser amount of β -glucosidase and its feed back inhibition by glucose. β -Glucosidase which is insensitive or at least tolerant to glucose and cellobiose is highly desired for the conversion of cellulosic biomass to glucose as cellulase systems of several other fungi are limited by the relatively lesser amount of β -glucosidase and its feed back inhibition by glucose [15]. Research on this line has yielded potential β -glucosidases from different microorganisms like *Candida peltata* [98], *Aspergillus oryzae* [99], and *A. niger* [15,100]. One of the major approaches taken towards improving the cellulase complex for biomass hydrolysis is to increase the copy number of β -glucosidase gene and thus the amount of the BGL enzyme in the cellulase mixture produced by *T. reesei* [101] while other is to alter the cellulase profile of *T. reesei* by introducing glucose tolerant BGL gene into the fungus [92].

Preparations of cellulase from a single organism may not be highly efficient for hydrolysis of different feed stock (see Section 3).

Another interesting idea is the use of artificial cellulosomes generated by engineering cellulosome bearing bacteria to express heterologous cellulases. Chimeric cellulosomes have been described for degradation of cellulosic substrates either by incorporating bacterial [102,103] or fungal [104] cellulases in cellulosomes by genetic engineering. The artificial cellulase complexes displayed enhanced activities compared to the corresponding free systems at least in the case of the bacterial enzymes [102,103]. The benefits of developing heterologous cellulase expression systems in rapidly growing bacteria include substantial enhancement of enzyme stability and specific activity, the potential for greater cell densities using fed-batch cultures, a dramatic reduction in cell-growth time, and the potential for protein overproduction [104]. The enhancement in activity was proposed to be resultant of the additional synergy induced by enzyme proximity within the complex and the effect of the cellulose binding module offered by the chimeric scaffold in that anchors the whole complex at substrate surface [104].

Above approaches discussed could be useful for developing cellulases for various specific applications, most importantly for bioconversion.

6. Conclusions

Development of improved cellulases for bioconversion seems to help materialize the dream of developing eco-friendly lignocellulosic ethanol to a reality. Improvement in cellulases has been achieved partly by developments in production technology such as, adopting cheaper bioprocess technology, employing cheaper substrate and employing engineered organisms and partly by developments of artificial/engineered cellulases and cocktails of enzyme. The leading enzyme companies claim and also have brought down the price of cellulases significantly. Although the commercial lignocellulosic ethanol production has just began in some parts of the world, still continuous research is needed to improve varied aspects on cellulase production (such as cost, specific activity and substrate specificity) to achieve better techno-economic feasibility. Artificial/engineered cellulases and enzyme cocktails rich in glucose tolerant β -glucosidase has been proved successful for increasing the rate or efficiency of hydrolysis of biomass so as to prove the technology economically feasible. But, the fact cannot be denied that despite several efforts, cellulase for bioconversion though available in the market is not easily accessible. It signifies the long way till to go.

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