

## Fabrication of Electricity from Wastewater by Utilizing Microbial Fuel Cells: A Review

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### ABSTRACT

Bioelectricity is the electric current produced by anaerobic ingestion of organic substrate by microorganism. A microbial fuel cell (MFC) is a appliance that transforms energy discharged outcome of oxidation of complicated natural carbon sources that area unit used as substrates by microorganisms to provide voltage thus demonstrating to be associate proficient ways that of viable energy production. The electrons released because of the microbial breakdown is seized to keep up ruthless potential density while not an efficient carbon discharge within system. Usage of microorganisms toward bioremediation is similar to the consequence as of the generation of electricity creates the MFC technology a very beneficial plan which could be smeared in varied segment of industries and agricultural wastes. Although the influences of MFCs in generation of electricity was initially low, modern development within the style elements and dealing has increased ability yield to a major step thus permit application of MFCs in varied sectors as well as waste material ministrations and biodepollution. The accompanying review gives a top-level view concerning the parts, operating, alteration and purpose of MFC technology for numerous analysis and industrial application.

**Keywords--** Biodepollution, Bioelectricity, Microbial fuel cell, Wastewater

### I. INTRODUCTION

Bioelectricity creation is the creation of power by life forms by virtue of creation of electrons coming about because of their digestion. These electrons delivered can be caught in order to keep up a steady fabrication of energy. Bacterial cells when given an appropriate substrate can use the segments creating electrons which can be collected and used by associating them through a circuit. These segments can be stuffed into a gathering called a 'microbial fuel cell' (MFC)

ending up being a wellspring of vitality. Anaerobic absorption of substrate by the small scale life forms is basic for the production of the electrons happening because of their digestion. The above responses show the metabolic responses did by the microorganisms in the absence of oxygen and then in the presence of oxygen[1].

#### *Microbial fuel cells:*

A MFC normally comprises of a few segments fundamentally partitioned into two chambers, that is, anodic and cathodic chamber containing the anode and cathode, separately. These chambers are isolated by a proton exchange membrane (PEM) (Figure 1). The organisms present in the anodic chamber are furnished with an ideal substrate which is anaerobically corrupted to discharge electrons which are moved from the anode to the cathode by means of outer circuit and the protons produced are specifically gone through the exchange membrane. Both these items delivered because of the activity of the organisms in the anodic compartment travel to the cathode and respond with oxygen to create water [2]. MFCs are gadgets that can change over compound vitality into electrical vitality by the procedure of oxidation of different carbon sources or even natural squanders did by electrochemically active bacteria (EAB)[3,4,5,6]. The MFC chambers can be developed by glass, polycarbonate, just as plexiglass [7] Materials, for example, carbon fabric, carbon paper, graphite can be utilized as anode terminal [8,9,10,11]. An air cathode is utilized to keep up the oxygen consuming nature of the terminal and this can be comprised of materials, for example, platinum(Pt) or Pt-black materials. The anode chamber comprises of the natural substrates which are to be used by the microorganisms to deliver electrons which move through the outer circuit to the cathode at last acknowledged by the arrangement present in the cathodic chamber. The protons created go from anode to cathode through the particle trade layer[12]. Ferricyanide ( $[\text{Fe}(\text{CN})_6]^{3-}$ ) or permanganate( $[\text{MnO}]^{4+}$ ) arrangements

can go about as compelling catholytes however are not manageable [13,14]

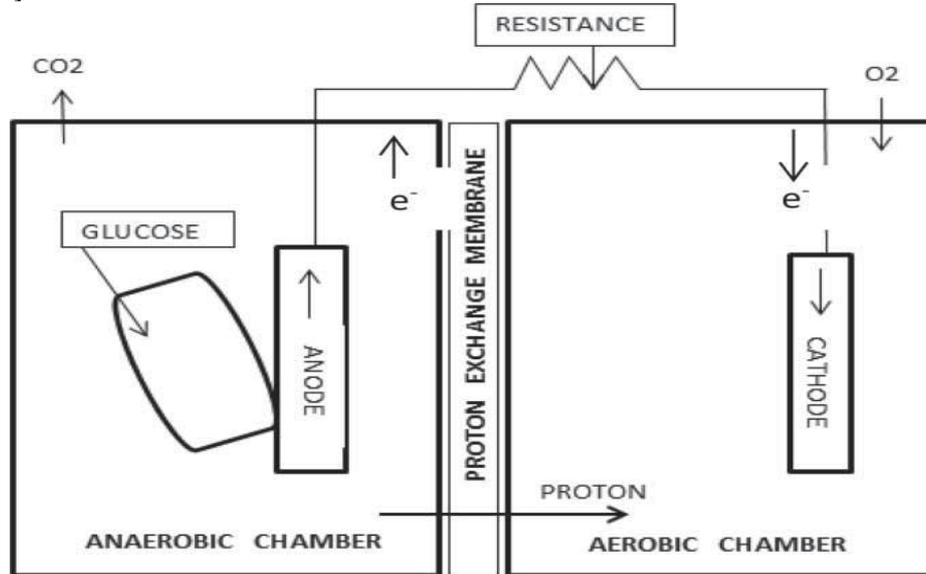


Figure 1: Schematic outline of a typical Microbial Fuel Cell. (Figure drawn with modifications after [15])

### Microorganisms

The major contribution of microbial population in MFC technology is accounted by *Geobacter* [16,17,18] and *Shewanella* [19,20,21] species also shows that use of MFC for power generation can also be achieved by photosynthetic bacteria. The problem of carbon dioxide removal from atmosphere is eliminated on usage of photosynthetic microbial systems [22]. Researches have been carried out on using cyanobacterial strains as biocatalysts in MFC. Studies shown that synergistic relationship can be achieved between photosynthetic microbial system and heterotrophic system. The symbiotic functioning involves in utilization of organic substrate synthesized during photosynthesis by heterotrophic microbial system. Using of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* with manipulated NAD co-factor increase the metabolic rate leading to enhance the production. Anaerobic acidogenesis of livestock waste process to be effective in power generation. Anaerobic acidogenesis of dairy cattle compost uncovered *Clostridium* sp., *Pseudomonas luteola* and *Ochrobactrum pseudogrignonense* to be groups present liable for the power production process [23]. Algal types of *Leptolyngbya* sp. Mixed cultures of microorganism population have been utilized in MFCs, for example, natural microbial community, domestic waste material, sediments from marine and lake in addition as distillery wastewater [24,25,26]. The commonly used microorganisms are given in table.1.

### Substrates

The natural substrates can be utilised for anaerobic digestion by the microorganism in biological current production. Wastewater from the household can be used for uninterrupted electric current [27]. The

generation of greatest power utilizing wastewater as a substrate using swine wastewater as a substrate in a single chambered MFC was demonstrated by [28]. For bioelectricity production, oil Wastewater can also be used [29, 30]. An effective substrate in bioelectricity production coupled with hydrogen production was also demonstrated by waste sludge [31, 32]. The microbes which are separated from high Andean locale in solitary chambered MFC are employed as substrate by fruit and vegetable wastes [33]. The utilization of nourishment squander leachate acquired from bio-hydrogen aging as potential substrate toward upgraded power fabrication was reported by researchers [34]. The power density measured for various substrates was in the order of propionate < butyrate < acetic acid derivation. This is of explicit significance in light of the fact that acidogenic debasement of natural squanders produces unstable unsaturated fats which relying on their proclivity toward the microorganisms affecting power age [34].

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### MFC design and components

The MFC generally consists two chamber that is an anodic and a cathodic one separate by a proton exchange membrane as shown in figure: 1.

### Two chamber MFC

The most simple kind of MFC comprises of two chambers isolated by material that conducts protons between the chambers. The used design has form of 'H', containing two bottles joined by a tube which has in built centrifuge that is a ion exchange membrane (CEM) eg: usual salt bridge. The electrodes used can be of any non-corrosive, current conducting with carbon paper cloth,

graphite etc., as anode. There should be a catalyst for water. The anode chamber carry the biodegradable substrate supplements (nitrogen, phosphorous, oxygen and trace materials). The oxygen scatter into the anode

chamber and is established the pace of oxygen dispersion into anode without a PEM is 2.7% [35, 36]. A typical two-chambered MFC is shown in Fig.2.

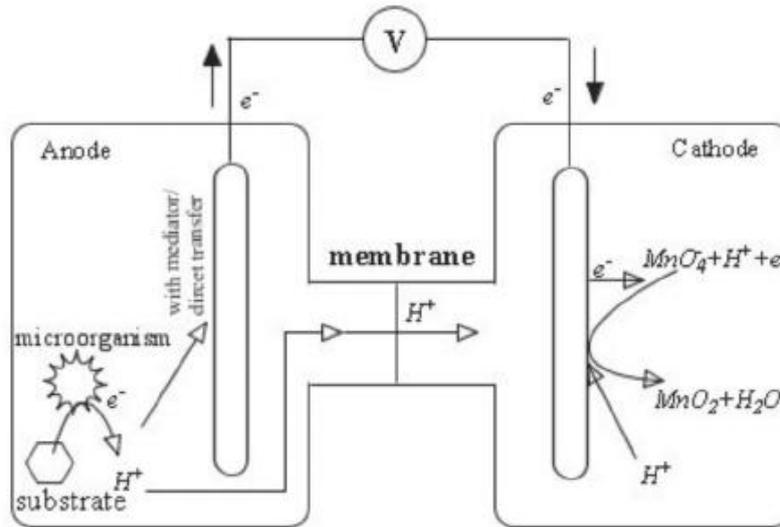


Figure 2: Diagrammatic outline of a classic dual chamber MFC (Figures with modifications after [37])

### Single chamber MFC

By avoiding the cathode chamber and PEM with direct contact of cathode a more efficient MFC can be built, because as there is no need in aerating water since the oxygen present in the air is directly transformed to the cathode. Primary design used in labs to give demonstration on electricity or current generation from wastewater consists of cathode in the center of a cylinder and the anode was present around the cathode. Graphite rods fined in the anode chamber is connected to the cathode chamber through outside circuit. Through the

middle tube the air is created to bubble so that it reacts with cathode. In some other SCMFC there are two electrodes present on opposite ends of the single tube available in the design. The anode in one of the end is wrapped to avoid the oxygen diffusion into the chamber. The other end is open so that the cathode or electrode faces (outsides) oxygen in the suggested a new air, while the another end is fixed placed in the PEM and face towards the solution chamber. Fig.3 represents the single chamber MFC.

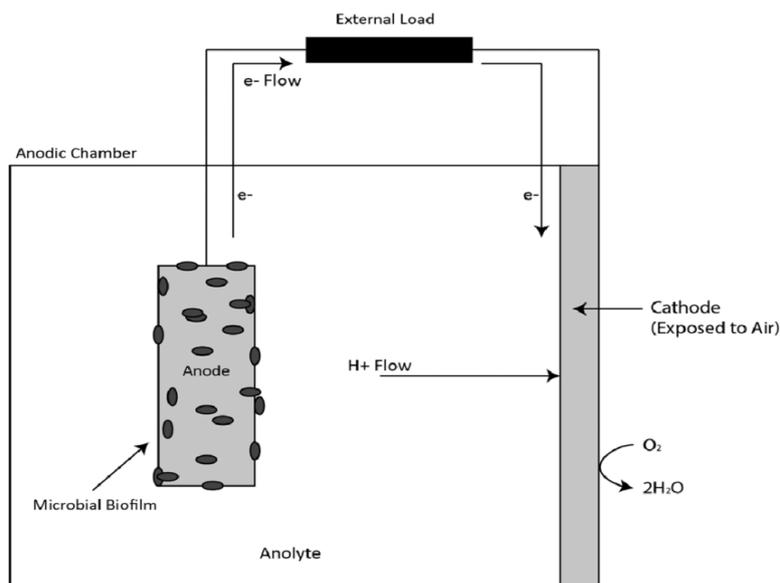
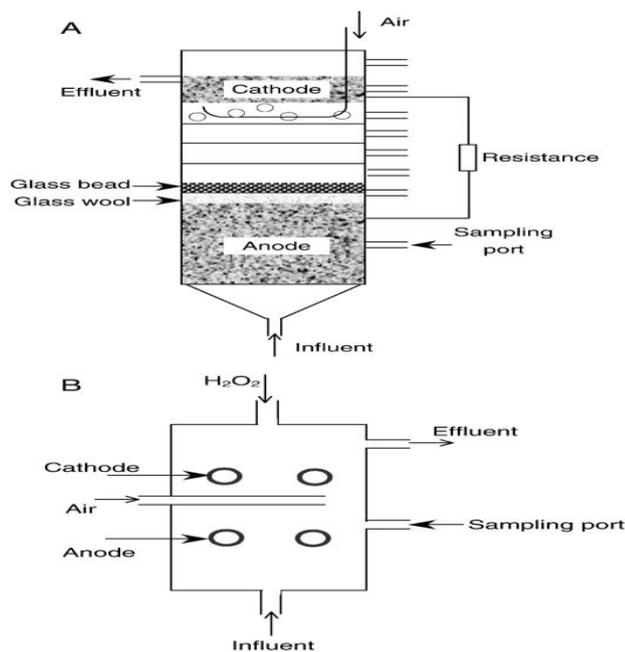


Figure 3: Diagrammatic representation of single chamber MFC (Figure with few modifications after [37,38])

**Up-flow model MFC systems**

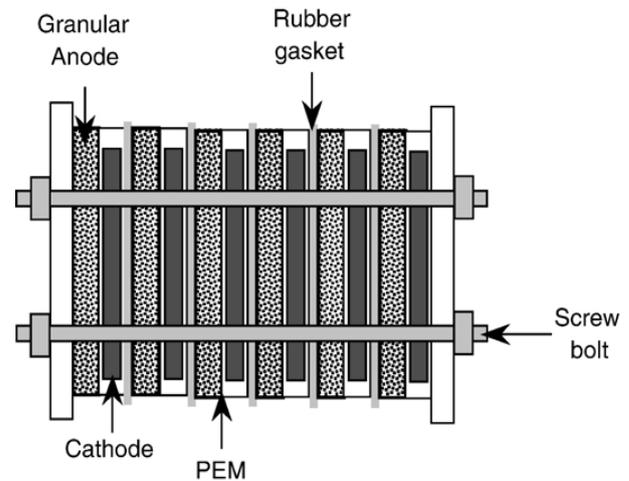
In that MFC a cylinder with plexiglass was divided into two different sections by glass wool as anode and glass bend layers as cathode chamber. The top graphite was disc-shaped was coated over anode and cathode and put at the base and the highest point of the reactor unit[39].The feed is supplied to the lower part of anode and release of effluent takes places through the cathode chamber and (comes) goes out at the top continuously[40,41]. There is no separate electrolyte for anode and cathode. The barriers for diffusion between the two electrodes produces a DO gradient optimum operation of the MFC. The figure 4 represents the up-flow model MFC systems.



**Figure 1: Diagrammatic representation of mediator- and membrane-less MFC with Cylinder (A) and rectangle (B) shape (Figures with few modifications after [40,39] respectively.)**

**Stacked MFC**

To investigate the performances of many MFCs joined in series and in parallel a stacked MFC is built [42]. Increased voltage or current is often produced by connecting MFCs in parallel. In adverse affect has not been reported or observed. The efficiency in terms of coulombic % differs greatly in different arrangement of parallel connections. The unit has six individual MFC with granular black lead anode. It is not a mensuration of negatron move rate, while the authors portrayed how much substrate was utilized for power age before the stream streamed out of the MFCs contrasted enormously in the two plans with the equal association giving about a proficiency multiple times. Fig. 5. Stacked MFCs consisting of six individual units with black lead anode. (Figure drawn to illustrate a photo in [42])



**Figure 5: Schematic representation of Stacked MFC consisting of six individual units with graphite anode.[42]**

**Wastewater**

Wastewater is any water that has been plagued by human use. Wastewater is "utilized water from any combination of local, industrial business or agricultural activities, surface runoff or storm water, and any sewer flow or sewer infiltration.

**III. OPERATION**

Two aspirating glass bottles are used to maintain the flow rate uniformly when used as head balancing tanks to feeds which the sample into the anaerobic chamber. To maintain the detention time pinch cocks are used. The wastewater is feed sample inside the anode chamber in anaerobic condition. The distilled water was filled in cathodic chamber. The two electrodes are at distance of 5cm. electrodes are attached to the copper wire using clips and the wire is connected to multi-meter outside the unit. Noted down every each of half an hour. The line diagram, pictorial view of overall experimental setup is shown in Fig-6.



probability can be used MFCs that use extraordinary energizes like sugar, organic product, dead creepy crawlies, grass and weed. Local consumption of biomass will be accustomed give renewable power for native consumption. Applications of MFCs during a starship are potential since they'll offer electricity whereas it degrades wastes generated aboard. Some scientists have estimated that within the future a miniature MFC will be planted body to control an implantable clinical gadget with the supplement nutrients equipped by the human body [52]. The MFC technology is especially favored for property long power applications. However, only after potential wellbeing and security issues in the MFC are completely fathomed, would it be able to be applied for various applications.

#### **Biohydrogen**

MFC being greatly used to produce chemical elements than electricity. Usually protons formed from anode reaction moves towards to cathode to react with oxygen to give water. The protons and the electrons formed through the metabolism in microorganisms generate hydrogen which is not favorable in terms of thermodynamics. The needed potential for MFC is 110mV and is comparably less than 1210mV which is used for direct electrolysis of water at pH 7, through biomass oxidation method. MFC generally produces about 8-9 mol water/mol compared to 4 mol water/mol glucose through conventional fermentation [53]. Other advantages include the accumulation of chemical etc., and it can be used later. Thus, MFC can act as renewable source for hydrogen to overcome the hydrogen demand all over the world economy.[54]

#### **Wastewater Treatment**

The MFCs can be utilized for treating waste water right off in 1991[55]. Civil waste material contains anorganic compounds which will enable fuel MFCs. The measure of intensity of power produced by MFCs in the wastewater treatment produces power reduces the electricity required for the treatment through the conventional process by 50% and uses more electric power for aeration purpose. Organic atoms, for example, acetic acid derivation, propionate, butyrate can be altogether broken down to CO<sub>2</sub> and H<sub>2</sub>O. A half breed fusing both electrophiles and anodophiles are particularly suitable for wastewater treatment because a variety of organics can be degraded with the help of organics.

MFCs required sure microbes have an ability to remove sulfides as needed in waste matter treatment [56]. MFCs can improve the development of bioelectrochemically dynamic organisms during wastewater treatment in this way they have great operational sound qualities. For scaling-up process Consistent stream and single-compartment MFCs and layer less MFCs are recommended [40,41,58]. Up to 80%of the COD can be removed in wastewater treatment [37,28] and a Coulombic efficiency of 80% can be achieved[58].

#### **Bio Sensors**

Another potential application of the MFC technology is to use it as a sensor for pollutant analysis and in situ process monitoring and control [59,60]. The Coulombic yield of MFCs of wastewater make MFCs can be used as biological oxygen demand (BOD) sensors (Kim et al., 2003). To measure the BOD value of a liquid is to calculate its Coulombic yield [59]. There is a good linear relationship between the Coulombic yield and the strength of the wastewater treatment in BOD concentration However, a high BOD concentration needs a long reporting time because the Coulombic yield can be calculated only after the BOD has been removed [61]. Since the current values increase with the BOD value linearly, the low BOD value based on the maximum current. During this stage, the anodic reaction is limited by substrate concentration. It is advantageous over other types because they have excellent operational stability and good reproducibility and accuracy. MFC-type BOD sensor constructed for over 5 years without extra maintenance, far longer in service life span than other types of BOD sensors.

## **V. CONCLUSION**

Electricity production through bio-based technology can help to achieve various goals like vitality creation to biofuel creation just as bioremediation. Electricity production from MFC can be used as economical wellspring of vitality limiting the use of non-renewable energy sources. By using microorganism effective way of removing the pollutants which could spoil the environment and make way for renewable energy.

**Table 1: Commonly used microorganism**

<b>Microbes</b>	<b>Substrate</b>	<b>Applications</b>	<b>Reference</b>
Actinobacillus succinogenes	Glucose	Neutral red or thionin as electron mediator	Park and Zeikus, (2000); Park and Zeikus,(1999); Park et al., (1999)
Aeromonas hydrophila	Acetate	Mediator-less MFC	Pham et al. (2003)
Alcaligenes faecalis, Enterococcus gallinarum, Pseudomonas aeruginosa	Glucose	Self-mediate consortia isolated from MFC with a maximal level of 4.31 W m <sup>-2</sup> .	Rabaey (2004)

<i>Clostridium beijerinckii</i>	Starch, glucose, lactate, molasses	Fermentative bacterium	Niessen et al. (2004b)
<i>Clostridium butyricum</i>	Starch, glucose, lactate, molasses	Fermentative bacterium	Niessen et al., 2004b; Park et al., (2001)
<i>Desulfovibriodesulfuricans</i>	Sucrose	Sulphate/sulphide as mediator	Ieropoulos et al., 2005a; Park et al., (1997)
<i>Erwinia dissolven</i>	Glucose	Ferric chelate complex as mediators	Vega and Fernandez, (1987)
<i>Escherichia coli</i>	Glucose sucrose	Mediators such as methylene blue needed.	Schroder et al.,( 2003); Ieropoulos et al.,(2005a); Grzebyk and Pozniak, (2005)
<i>Geobactermetallireducens</i>	Acetate	Mediator-less MFC	Min et al. (2005a)
<i>Geobactersulfurreducens</i>	Acetate	Mediator-less MFC	Bond and Lovley,( 2003); Bond et al., (2002)
<i>Gluconobacteroxydans</i>	Glucose	Mediator (HNQ, resazurin or thionine) needed	Lee et al. (2002)
<i>Klebsiella pneumonia</i>	Glucose	HNQ as mediator biomineralized manganese as electron acceptor	Rhoads et al.,(2005); Menicucci et al., (2006)
<i>Lactobacillus plantarum</i>	Glucose	Ferric chelate complex as mediators	Vega and Fernandez, (1987)
<i>Proteus mirabilis</i>	Glucose	Thionin as mediator	Choi et al., 2003; Thurston et al.,(1985)
<i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i>	Glucose	Pyocyanin and phenazine-1-carboxamide as mediator	Rabaey et al., (2004), (2005a)
<i>Rhodoferaxferrireducens</i>	Glucose, xylose sucrose, maltose	Mediator-less MFC	Chaudhuri and Lovley,( 2003); Liu et al., (2006)
<i>Shewanellaoneidensis</i>	Lactate	Anthraquinone-2,6-disulfonate (AQDS) as mediator	Ringeisen et al., (2006)
<i>Shewanellaputrefaciens</i>	Lactate, pyruvate, acetate, glucose	Mediator-less MFC but incorporating an electron mediator like Mn(IV) or NR into the anode enhanced the electricity production	Kim et al., (1999a,b); Park and Zeikus, (2002)
<i>Streptococcus lactis</i>	Glucose	Ferric chelate complex as mediators	Vega and Fernandez, (1987)

**Table 2: Performance of microbial fuel cells for bioelectricity generation using pure cultures.**

Microorganism	Type of MFC	Substrate	Electrode materials	Current density/ Power density	Reference
<i>Klebsiella pneumonia</i>	Single-chamber MFC	Glucose	Carbon cloth	199 mA/m <sup>2</sup>	Hassan et al., 2012
<i>Desulfovibrio desulfuricans</i>	Double-chamber MFC	Wastewater	Graphite felt	233 mA/ m <sup>2</sup>	Min et al., 2005
<i>Escherichia coli</i>	Double-chamber MFC	Glucose	IPAN/ TiO <sub>2</sub> composite-anode Carbon cloth-cathode	3390 mA/ m <sup>2</sup>	Lu et al., 2009

<i>Saccharomyces cerevisiae</i>	Single-chamber MFC	Synthetic wastewater	Graphite plates	282 mA/ m <sup>2</sup>	Rodrigo et al., 2007
<i>Thermincola ferriatica</i>	Double-chamber MFC	Acetate	Graphite carbon fibres	12000 mA/ m <sup>2</sup>	Kang et al., 2014
<i>Lysinbacillus</i>	Double-chamber MFC	Glucose	Graphite felt	85 mW/ m <sup>2</sup>	Feng et al., 2011
<i>sphaericus Citrobacter sp.</i>	Single-chamber MFC	Acetate	Carbon cloth	205 mA/ m <sup>2</sup>	Wen et al., 2009
<i>Ochrobactrum sp</i>	Double-chamber MFC	Xylose	Carbon fibres brush	2625 mW/ m <sup>3</sup>	Feng et al., 2008
<i>Shewanella putrefaciens</i>	Single-chamber MFC	Lactate	Carbon cloth	4920 mW/ m <sup>3</sup>	Durruty et al., 2012
<i>Scenedesmus</i>	Double-chamber MFC	Acetate	Carbon fiber brush-anode Carbon cloth-cathode	1926 mW/ m <sup>2</sup>	Cheng et al., 2010
<i>Shewanella oneidensis</i>	Mini-MFC	Lactate	Graphite-felt	3000 mW/ m <sup>2</sup>	Fang et al., 2013
Cyanobacteria	Single-chamber MFC	Domestic wastewater	Graphite felt-anode, Carbon cloth-cathode	114 mW/ m <sup>2</sup>	Prathap et al., 2013
<i>Chlorella vulgaris</i>	Double-chamber MFC	Wastewater	Carbon felt-anode Carbon cloth-cathode	2485 mW/ m <sup>3</sup>	Kracke et al., 2015.
<i>Rhodospseudomonas palustris</i>	Single-chamber MFC	Wastewater	Carbon paper-anode Carbon cloth-cathode	2720 mW/ m <sup>2</sup>	Pirbadian et al., 2014
<i>Coriolus versicolor</i>	Double-chamber MFC	2ABTS	Carbon fibres	320 mW/ m <sup>3</sup>	Okamoto et al., 2014
<i>Geobacter metallireducens</i>	Double-chamber MFC	Domestic wastewater	Carbon paper	40 mW/ m <sup>2</sup>	Nevin et al., 2008
<i>Geobacter sulfurreducens</i>	Double-chamber MFC	Acetate	Carbon fibres	1.9 mW/ m <sup>2</sup>	Wetser et al., 2015

**Table 3: Performance of microbial fuel cells for bioelectricity generation using mixed cultures**

Source of inoculum	Type of MFC	Substrate	Electrode material	Current density/Power density/ Voltage	Reference
Dairy manure wastewater	Single-chamber MFC	Dairy manure wastewater	Graphite fiber brush	190 mW/ m <sup>2</sup>	Richter et al., 2008
Potato wastewater	Single-chamber MFC	Potato wastewater	Graphite fiber brush	217 mW/m	Richter et al., 2008

Activated sludge	Double-chamber MFC	Acetate, glucose	Carbon paper	410 mV	Clarke et al., 2011
Primary wastewater	Double-chamber MFC	Acetate	Graphite rods	152 mA/ m <sup>2</sup>	Coursolle et al., 2010
Activated sludge	Single-chamber MFC	Acetate, glucose	Carbon cloth	1084 mW/ m <sup>2</sup>	Inoue et al., 2010
Activated sludge	Double-chamber MFC	IPOME	Polyacrylonitrile carbon felt	107 mW/ m <sup>2</sup>	Malvankar et al., 2012
Activated sludge	Single-chamber MFC	Glucose	Carbon cloth	68 mW/ m <sup>2</sup>	Okamoto et al., 2014
Activated sludge	Single-chamber MFC	Acetate	Graphite coated with graphene -anode, carbon cloth-cathode	670 mW/ m <sup>2</sup>	Lebedev et al., 2014
Primary wastewater	Single-chamber MFC	Acetic acid	Graphite fiber brushes-anode Carbon cloth-cathode	835 mW/ m <sup>2</sup>	Baranitharan et al., 2015
Primary wastewater	Single-chamber MFC	Ethanol	Graphite fiber brushes-anode Carbon cloth-cathode	820 mW/ m <sup>2</sup>	Baranitharan et al., 2015
Primary wastewater	Single-chamber MFC	Lactic acid	Graphite fiber brushes-anode Carbon cloth-cathode	739 mW/ m <sup>2</sup>	Baranitharan et al., 2015
Primary wastewater	Single-chamber MFC	Succinic acid	Graphite fiber brushes-anode Carbon cloth-cathode	444 mW/ m <sup>2</sup>	Baranitharan et al., 2015
Anaerobic sludge	Double-chamber MFC	Slaughterhouse wastewater	Carbon cloth-anode Titanium mesh-cathode	578 mW/ m <sup>2</sup>	Ci et al., 2012
Anaerobic reactor effluent	Double-chamber MFC	Acetate	Carbon cloth-anode Granular active carbon-cathode	1200 mW/ m <sup>3</sup>	Liang et al., 2011
Soil	Double-chamber MFC	Cellulose	Carbon paper	188 mW/ m <sup>2</sup>	Wu et al., 2013

**Table 4: Performance of microbial fuel cells for wastewater treatment**

Wastewater	Type of MFC	Electrode material	% COD reduction	Reference
Swine wastewater	Single-chamber MFC	Toray carbon paper as anode carbon cloth as cathode	92	Kumar et al., 2015

Starch processing wastewater	Single-chamber MFC	Carbon paper	98	Yu et al., 2015
Real urban wastewater	Double-chamber MFC	Graphite electrodes	70	Zhang et al., 2014
Olive mill wastewaters	Single-chamber MFC	Carbon cloth as electrodes	65	Ahmed et al., 2012.
Protein-rich wastewater	Double-chamber MFC	Graphite rods as electrodes	80	Xu et al., 2015
Paper recycling wastewater	Single-chamber MFC	Graphite fibers-brush	76	Huang et al., 2008
Cassava mill wastewater	Double-chamber MFC	Graphite plates electrode	86	Li et al., 2010
Food processing wastewater	Double-chamber MFC	Carbon paper electrodes	95	Li et al., 2013.
Domestic wastewater	Double-chamber MFC	Plain graphite electrodes	88	Oh et al., 2005
Chocolate industry wastewater	Double-chamber MFC	Graphite rods as electrodes	75	Ahn et al., 2010
Biodiesel wastes	Single-chamber MFC	Carbon brush electrodes	90	Kaewkannetra et al., 2011
Beer brewery wastewater	Single-chamber MFC	Carbon fibers	43	Abourached et al., 2014
Potato Processing wastewater	Tubular MFC	Graphite particles as anode Graphite felt as cathode	91	Zhang et al., 2012;
Palm oil mill effluent	1UML-MFCs	Graphite granules, Carbon fiber felt	90	Wang et al., 2011
Animal carcass wastewater	Up-flow tubular MFC	Graphite felt as anode Carbon cloth as cathode	51	Kong et al., 2014
Food waste leachate	Double-chamber MFC	Carbon felt	85	Strycharz et al., 2008;
Chemical wastewater	Double-chamber MFC	Graphite plates	63	Orellana et al., 2013;

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