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## Thermal stability and catalytic efficiency of $\beta$ -Glucosidase extracted from biogas slurry: Implications for biomass conversion

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**ABSTRACT:** Biogas slurry (BGS), a nutrient-rich byproduct of anaerobic digestion, contains valuable enzymes like  $\beta$ -glucosidase, essential for lignocellulosic biomass degradation. This study investigated the kinetic and thermodynamic properties of  $\beta$ -glucosidase extracted from BGS. The enzyme was purified through lyophilization and ammonium sulfate precipitation, resulting in an 8.3-fold increase in activity. Optimal enzyme activity was observed at 60°C and pH 7.0, with a  $V_{\max}$  of  $4.207 \pm 0.07$  mM/min,  $K_m$  of  $2.51 \pm 0.01$  mM and a catalytic efficiency ( $K_{\text{cat}}/K_m$ ) of  $0.36 \pm 0.003$  s/M.  $\beta$ -glucosidase exhibited high thermal and pH stability, retaining significant activity after prolonged exposure to high temperatures and varying pH levels. The activation energy ( $E_a$ ) of  $14.97 \pm 0.67$  kJ/mol and a temperature coefficient ( $Q_{10}$ ) of  $1.16 \pm 0.06$ , was indicating enzyme stability across a range of temperatures. These findings suggested that  $\beta$ -glucosidase from BGS could be a cost-effective and sustainable enzyme source for biofuel production from lignocellulosic biomass and could be suitable for large-scale waste valorization.

**Key words:** Bio-Gas Slurry (BGS), catalytic efficiency, enzyme kinetics, optimum temperature and pH, residual activity, thermodynamic analysis

Biogas slurry (BGS) is a nutrient-rich byproduct generated from the anaerobic digestion of organic materials, particularly livestock manure and agricultural residues. It is characterized by a high concentration of essential nutrients such as nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) that are crucial for plant growth and soil health (Kumar *et al.*, 2023). Traditional uses of BGS primarily focus on its application as a fertilizer, enhancing soil nutrient profiles and improving crop yields (Yadav *et al.*, 2023). Recent studies indicate that BGS also holds significant potential as a source of valuable enzymes, specifically  $\beta$ -glucosidases, which are vital for the degradation of lignocellulosic biomass (Srivastava *et al.*, 2019). Lignocellulosic biomass, which is primarily composed of cellulose, hemicellulose and lignin, represents an abundant yet challenging feedstock for conversion processes due to its complex structural composition (Periyasamy *et al.*, 2018). The key challenge lies in breaking down these polymers effectively, which is essential for transforming biomass into fermentable sugars for biofuels and biochemical products (Zang *et al.*, 2018; Lopes *et al.*, 2017).  $\beta$ -Glucosidase plays a central role in the enzymatic hydrolysis of lignocellulosic materials by catalyzing the hydrolysis of cellobiose

into glucose (Konar *et al.*, 2019; Teugjas and Valjamae, 2013). This step is crucial, as the accumulation of cellobiose can inhibit the activity of other cellulases, impeding the overall hydrolysis process (Wang and Lu, 2016). By converting cellobiose into glucose,  $\beta$ -glucosidase not only alleviates this inhibitory effect but also improves the overall efficiency of cellulose degradation, thereby facilitating the production of biofuels such as bioethanol and biogas (Singhania *et al.*, 2013). The resulting glucose can be readily fermented by microorganisms, including yeast and bacteria, leading to bioenergy production (Shin *et al.*, 2024; Lopes *et al.*, 2017). In addition to its significant role in biofuel production,  $\beta$ -glucosidase is applied in various biochemical contexts, including the synthesis of oligosaccharides and the formation of pharmacologically active glycosides (Tran *et al.*, 2023; Kim *et al.*, 2022).  $\beta$ -glucosidase has also role the food industry for processing and enhancing flavors, as well as in the pharmaceutical sector for the production of drug precursors through glycosylation reactions (Kannan *et al.*, 2023; Amer *et al.*, 2017). The extraction of  $\beta$ -glucosidase from BGS presents a sustainable and economically viable alternative to traditional enzyme production

methods, which often involve high manufacturing and purification costs (Kumar *et al.*, 2023). The utilization of biogas slurry not only offers a solution to waste management but also promotes the recycling of nutrients and the production of enzymes that can help in the valorization of lignocellulosic biomass (Stumpe *et al.*, 2012). This study aims to explore the kinetic and thermodynamic properties of  $\alpha$ -glucosidase extracted from BGS, focusing on optimal temperature and pH conditions, kinetic parameters such as  $K_m$ ,  $V_{max}$  and  $K_{cat}$  and thermodynamic properties like activation energy ( $E_a$ ) and the temperature coefficient ( $Q_{10}$ ), to determine the enzyme's stability and functionality under different conditions. By characterizing  $\alpha$ -glucosidase from BGS, the study seeks to establish its potential as a cost-effective and sustainable enzyme source for lignocellulosic biomass degradation, promoting the use of BGS-derived enzymes in bioenergy production and other industrial sectors.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Source of Biogas Slurry

Ten liters of biogas slurry (BGS) was collected from four functional cow-dung-based biogas plants after 60-75 days of digestion at the experimental Dairy Farm Nagla, G.B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar. The BGS was sonicated at 4°C for 5 minutes, followed by centrifugation at 10,000 g for 30 minutes (Jeilu *et al.*, 2024). The supernatant was used as crude enzyme extract. A portion of the extract was lyophilized for 48 hours, while another portion was precipitated at 0-80% ammonium sulfate saturation, dissolved in phosphate buffer (pH 6.0) and dialyzed for 48 hours at 4°C (Zhang *et al.*, 2024).

### $\beta$ -glucosidase Activity Assay

$\beta$ -glucosidase activity was measured by incubating 1 mL of enzyme extract with 1 mL of 30 mM pNPG (4-Nitrophenyl- $\beta$ -D-glucopyranoside) in 100 mM phosphate buffer (pH 6.6) at 50°C for 10 minutes. The reaction was terminated by adding 2 mL of 1 M  $Na_2CO_3$  and absorbance was measured at 410 nm (Kim *et al.*, 2022). One unit of enzyme activity was defined as the amount of enzyme required to release

1  $\mu$ mol of p-nitrophenol per minute under assay conditions (Teugjas and Valjamae, 2013).

### Determination of Optimum Temperature and pH

The optimum temperature for  $\beta$ -glucosidase activity was determined by incubating the enzyme extract at temperatures ranging from 30°C to 90°C in phosphate buffer (pH 6.6) (Singhania *et al.*, 2013; Goswami *et al.*, 2016). Similarly, the optimum pH was determined by incubating the enzyme at pH values ranging from 3.0 to 9.0 at the optimum temperature (60°C) (Singh *et al.*, 2023).

### Temperature and pH Stability

The temperature stability of  $\beta$ -glucosidase was assessed by incubating the enzyme at various temperatures (40°C to 80°C) in phosphate buffer (pH 7.0) without substrate for 1 hour (Dong *et al.*, 2023). The residual enzyme activity was measured under standard assay conditions. For pH stability, the enzyme was pre-incubated in buffers of different pH (4.0 to 8.0) for 1 hour, followed by the measurement of residual activity (Lopes *et al.*, 2017).

### Kinetic Parameters

The kinetic parameters of  $\beta$ -glucosidase, including the Michaelis constant ( $K_m$ ) and maximum reaction velocity ( $V_{max}$ ), were determined by measuring the initial reaction rates at various substrate (pNPG) concentrations (0.5-10 mM) using the Lineweaver-Burk plot (de Andrades *et al.*, 2019; Yapi *et al.*, 2009). The turnover number ( $K_{cat}$ ) and catalytic efficiency ( $K_{cat}/K_m$ ) were calculated from the measured  $V_{max}$  and  $K_m$  values (Jeilu *et al.*, 2024; Liu *et al.*, 2012). The reaction was conducted at the optimal temperature (60°C) and pH (7.0) (Klimes *et al.*, 2017; Zhang *et al.*, 2011).

### Thermodynamic Constants

The activation energy ( $E_a$ ) and temperature coefficient ( $Q_{10}$ ) for  $\beta$ -glucosidase were determined using the Arrhenius equation (Paz-Ferreiro *et al.*, 2015). The reaction rates were measured at various temperatures and a plot of the natural logarithm of the reaction rate versus the reciprocal of temperature (in Kelvin) was used to calculate  $E_a$  (Mfombep *et*

*al.*, 2013). The  $Q_{10}$  was calculated by comparing the reaction rates over a 10°C temperature range (Dong *et al.*, 2023).

### Statistical Analysis

Standard error was calculated manually for all the experiments. All treatments were completed in triplicate. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and post-hoc tests (Bonferroni Tukey, Duncan, Least Significant Difference) with a significance level (alpha) of 0.05 were conducted.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Enzyme Activity and Specific Activity

The crude extract of  $\beta$ -glucosidase exhibited an activity of  $0.42 \pm 0.01$  U/mL and a specific activity of  $0.77 \pm 0.03$  U/mg. After lyophilization, the enzyme activity increased to  $0.92 \pm 0.02$  U/mL and the specific activity rose to  $1.21 \pm 0.03$  U/mg (Table 1). Lyophilization, a process known to concentrate the enzyme by removing water, stabilizes the enzyme and reduces degradation, leading to enhanced activity (Fischer *et al.*, 2014; Aguiar-Oliveira *et al.*, 2013). Following precipitation, the enzyme activity further increased to  $3.49 \pm 0.06$  U/mL, with a corresponding specific activity of  $1.42 \pm 0.02$  U/mg, signifying an 8.3-fold increase in enzymatic activity compared to the crude extract. This substantial enhancement underscores the effectiveness of the precipitation process in purifying and concentrating the enzyme by removing inhibitory compounds or impurities. Karami *et al.* (2020) demonstrated a similar purification process, achieving an 86-fold increase in  $\beta$ -glucosidase activity from a crude extract, highlighting the effectiveness of such purification strategies.  $\beta$ -glucosidase activity is also known to be present in biogas slurry, a byproduct of

anaerobic digestion of agricultural residues and biowaste (Zhang *et al.*, 2024). The significant increases in both enzyme activity and specific activity after lyophilization and precipitation can thus be attributed to the concentration of the enzyme and the removal of interfering substances that hinder its activity in the crude extract.

### Optimum Temperature and pH

The optimal temperature for  $\beta$ -glucosidase activity was determined to be 60°C, with an enzyme activity of  $4.45 \pm 0.12$  U/mL and a specific activity of  $1.81 \pm 0.05$  U/mg. Similarly, the optimal pH was found to be 7.0, yielding an enzyme activity of  $4.77 \pm 0.13$  U/mL and a specific activity of  $1.94 \pm 0.05$  U/mg (Fig.1). These optimal temperature and pH conditions are crucial for the enzyme's application in biowaste processing and biomass hydrolysis, particularly in biogas slurry.  $\beta$ -glucosidases from various microbial sources often exhibit optimal activity within specific temperature and pH ranges, influencing their efficiency in converting cellulose into glucose, a critical step in biofuel production. Del Pozo *et al.* (2012) and Mendez-Liter *et al.* (2018) similarly reported the optimal temperature for  $\beta$ -glucosidase activity as 60°C, while the optimal pH for activity has been noted to vary between 4.0 and 7.0, depending on the enzyme source (Yan *et al.*, 2016). These findings reinforce that the enzyme performs best within a narrow range of physiological conditions, maximizing its role in biomass degradation.

### Enzyme Stability

$\beta$ -glucosidase exhibited the highest residual activity at pH 7.0, with significant losses in activity at extreme pH levels. The enzyme retained its peak activity at 60°C, but a notable decline occurred at 70°C, indicating that it is sensitive to temperatures above its optimal range (Fig. 2). Enzyme stability under different pH and temperature conditions is essential for its practical application in industrial processes involving biogas slurry and biowaste. Yu *et al.* (2007) and Bai *et al.* (2013) reported similar findings, indicating that  $\beta$ -glucosidase displays optimal activity at pH 5.0 and remains stable across temperatures ranging from 50°C to 80°C. Tiwari *et*

**Table 1: Enzyme Activity and Specific Activity of  $\beta$ -Glucosidase Enzymes in Biogas slurry**

Sample	Enzyme Activity (Unit/ml)	Specific Activity (Unit/mg)
Crude	$0.42 \pm 0.01^c$	$0.77 \pm 0.03^c$
Lyophilized	$0.92 \pm 0.02^b$	$1.21 \pm 0.03^b$
Precipitated	$3.49 \pm 0.06^a$	$1.42 \pm 0.02^a$

Note: Means in a column followed by a different letter in the superscript are significantly different at  $p < 0.05$ .

*al.* (2017) showed that  $\beta$ -glucosidase from *Bacillus subtilis* retained 78% of its activity at 80°C and 68.32% at 50°C after 48 hours, which is consistent with the thermostability observed in this study. Such stability is beneficial for prolonged industrial applications, ensuring the enzyme's performance under varying conditions.

### Kinetic Parameters

The maximum reaction velocity ( $V_{\max}$ ) for  $\beta$ -glucosidase was measured at  $4.207 \pm 0.07$  mM/min, while the Michaelis constant ( $K_m$ ) was  $2.51 \pm 0.01$  mM, indicating high substrate affinity. The enzyme exhibited a turnover number ( $K_{\text{cat}}$ ) of  $0.9 \pm 0.01$ /min, with a catalytic efficiency ( $K_{\text{cat}}/K_m$ ) of  $0.36 \pm 0.003$  s/M (Table 2). These kinetic parameters reflect the enzyme's efficiency, particularly at low substrate concentrations.  $\beta$ -glucosidases from different sources exhibit varied kinetic properties, shaped by their adaptation to specific functional roles or ecological niches. Ten Kate *et al.* (2024) reported  $V_{\max}$  values of 1.6 and 22.1  $\mu\text{mol}/\text{min}/\text{mg}$  for  $\beta$ -glucosidase from *Thermotoga maritima*, with corresponding  $K_m$  values of 0.4 and 12.9 mM, highlighting the variability across different enzyme sources. A lower  $K_m$ , such as the  $2.51 \pm 0.01$  mM observed in this study, signifies a stronger affinity for the substrate. Similarly, Bai *et al.* (2013) reported

a  $K_m$  of 0.37 mM for  $\beta$ -glucosidase from *Penicillium occitanis*, reflecting a very high affinity, though with a lower  $V_{\max}$ . In comparison,  $\beta$ -glucosidase from rye has a  $K_m$  of 83  $\mu\text{M}$ , further illustrating the diversity of kinetic profiles among  $\beta$ -glucosidases from different origins (Purushothaman and Siddalinga, 2011). This suggests that  $\beta$ -glucosidase in this study demonstrates a balanced affinity and catalytic efficiency suitable for industrial applications.

### Thermodynamic Constants

The activation energy ( $E_a$ ) for  $\beta$ -glucosidase was calculated to be  $14.97 \pm 0.67$  kJ/mol, while the temperature coefficient ( $Q_{10}$ ) was  $1.16 \pm 0.06$  (Table 2), indicating that the enzyme is relatively stable across temperature fluctuations compared to other lignocellulosic enzymes. Thermodynamic parameters such as  $E_a$  and  $Q_{10}$  offer valuable insights into the enzyme's stability and activity under various temperature conditions, which is crucial for optimizing its performance in biogas slurry and biowaste applications. Yan *et al.* (2010) and Bai *et al.* (2013) studied these thermodynamic properties for  $\beta$ -glucosidase from different sources, highlighting the importance of such metrics in evaluating enzyme stability. Yapi *et al.* (2009) reported an activation energy of 68.78 kJ/mol for  $\beta$ -

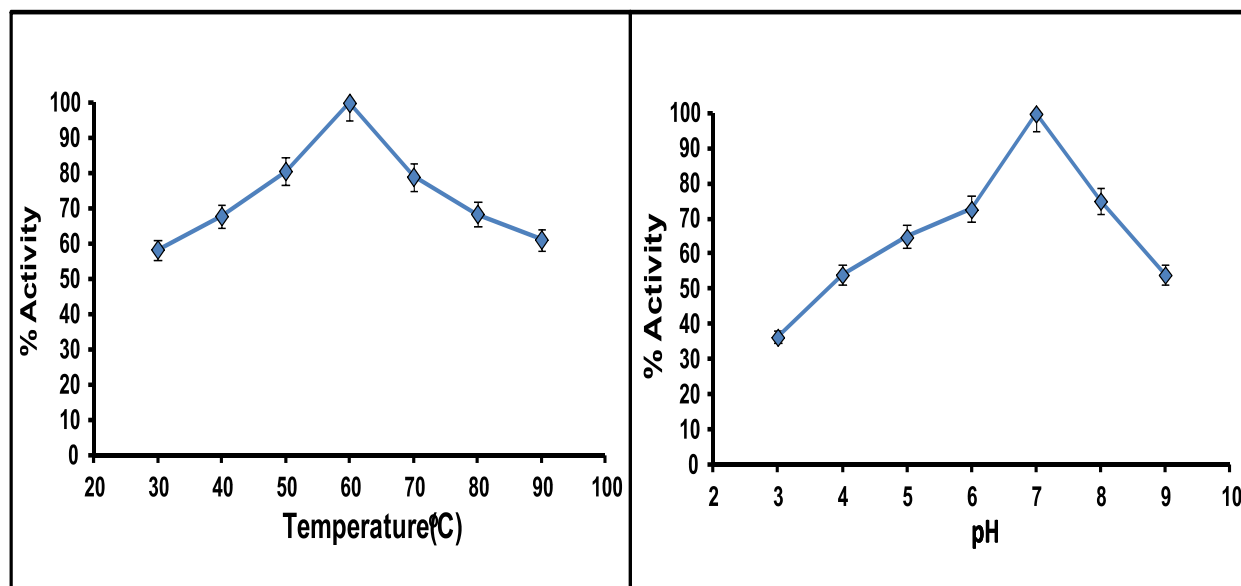


Fig. 1: Effect of Temperature and pH on  $\beta$ -Glucosidase Activity (in % activity)

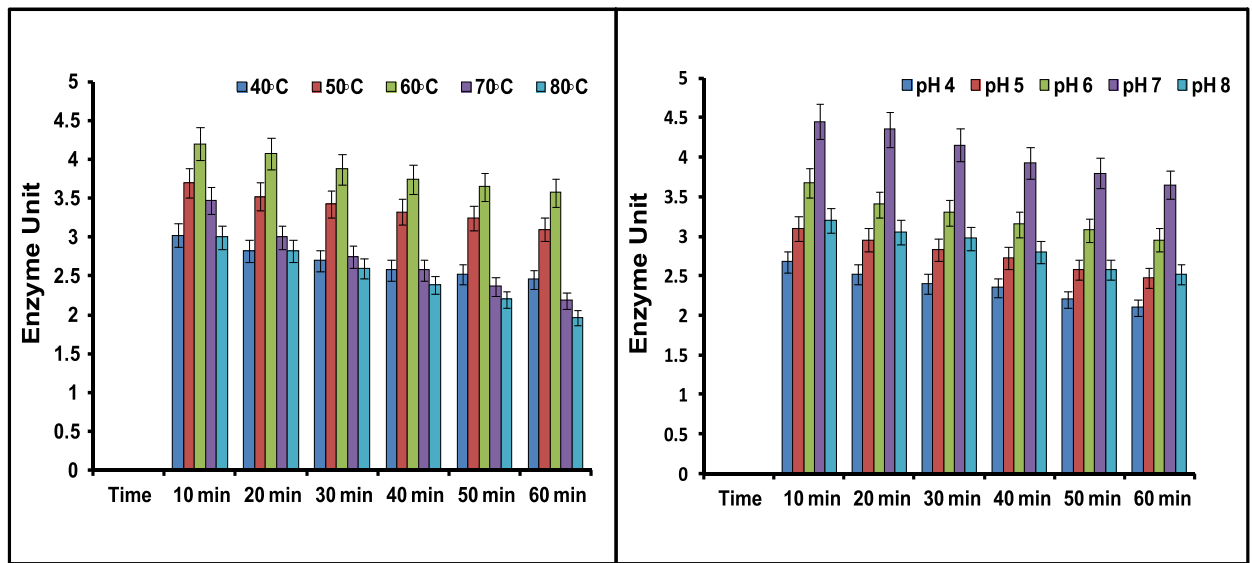


Fig. 2: Effect of Temperature and pH on the Long-Term Stability of  $\beta$ -Glucosidase

Table 2: Different kinetic and thermodynamic parameters of  $\beta$ -Glucosidase Enzyme in Biogas Slurry

	$V_{max}$	$K_m$	$k$ (/sec)	$K_{cat}$ (/min)	$K_{cat}/K_m$ (/s/M)	$E_a$ (KJ/mole)	$Q_{10}$
$\beta$ -Glucosidase	$4.207 \pm 0.07$ mM/min	$2.51 \pm 0.01$ mM	$0.028 \pm 0.002$	$0.9 \pm 0.01$	$0.36 \pm 0.003$	$14.97 \pm 0.67$	$1.16 \pm 0.06$

glucosidase, while Chauve *et al.* (2010) calculated an  $E_a$  of 53.2 kJ/mol for  $\beta$ -glucosidase from *Aspergillus niger* over a temperature range of 30°C to 60°C. Additionally, Eivazi and Tabatabai (1988) recorded an  $E_a$  of 30.8 kJ/mol for soil-derived  $\beta$ -glucosidase. These values underscore the variability in thermodynamic constants depending on the enzyme's source and environmental conditions. The relatively low activation energy and moderate  $Q_{10}$  value observed in this study suggest that  $\beta$ -glucosidase is well-suited for catalysis under a range of temperatures, making it a robust candidate for industrial processes such as biomass hydrolysis.

The present study on  $\beta$ -Glucosidase extracted from biogas slurry (BGS) demonstrated promising kinetic and thermodynamic properties, including high substrate affinity ( $K_m$ : 2.51 mM) and notable stability at 60°C and pH 7.0, making it highly suitable for lignocellulosic biomass degradation. The enzyme's relatively low activation energy ( $E_a$ : 14.97 kJ/mol) and temperature coefficient ( $Q_{10}$ : 1.16) suggested robust performance under varied industrial conditions. These findings position BGS-derived  $\beta$ -

glucosidase as a cost-effective and sustainable alternative for bioenergy production and other industrial applications, particularly in biomass conversion processes. Future studies could focus on enhancing the enzyme's thermostability through genetic or chemical modifications to expand its usability in harsher conditions. Additionally, exploring its potential for large-scale industrial applications in biofuel production and the synthesis of bioactive compounds can further contribute to waste valorization and circular economy models, offering environmentally friendly solutions to energy and biochemical production challenges.

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