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NANOTECHNOLOGY IN ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION: A SUSTAINABLE FRONTIER

Nabeel Tariq[1], Waqas Afzal[2], Adeel Ur Rehman[3], Sahar Nadeem[4], Faran Durrani[5], Asim Ullah[6], Kifayat Ullah[7], Gullalai Wazir[8]

[1]Department of Physics, University of Sargodha, Pakistan, Email: nabeel.tariq.908347@gmail.com

[2]Department of Chemistry, Division of Science & Technology, University of Education, Township, Lahore 54770, Pakistan, Email: chdrwaqas@gmail.com

[3]Department of Environmental Engineering, Dawood University of Engineering and Technology, Karachi, Pakistan, Email: adeelrehman72@duet.edu.pk

[4]Department of Biotechnology, Superior University Lahore, Pakistan, Email: saharnadeem571@gmail.com

[5]Department of Botany, University of Science and Technology Banu. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, Email: farandurrani@gmail.com

[6]Department of Botany, University of Science and Technology, Banu Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, Email: asimafzal475@gmail.com

[7]Department of Botany, University of Science and Technology, Banu Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, Email: kifayatshahktk555@gmail.com

[8]Department of Botany, University of Science and Technology, Banu Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, Email: gullalaishamal876@gmail.com

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Corresponding Author: Waqas Afzal, Department of Chemistry, Division of Science & Technology, University of Education, Township, Lahore 54770, Pakistan

Email:chdrwaqas@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

With traditional remediation methods frequently proving insufficient, expensive, and environmentally intrusive, environmental pollution has become a major worldwide concern. Nanotechnology has emerged as a viable substitute for environmental remediation in recent years, providing long-lasting and incredibly effective solutions. This study investigates the use of nanotechnology to combat pollution in the air, water, and soil. Nanomaterials like metal oxides, carbon-based structures, and biogenic nanoparticles can efficiently remove or neutralize a variety of contaminants because of their special physicochemical characteristics, which include a high surface area-to-volume ratio, enhanced reactivity, and tunable surface functionalities. The study provides a thorough examination of the processes that nanomaterials use to function, such as photocatalysis, redox reactions, and adsorption. The importance of biocompatible and green-synthesized nanoparticles as environmentally friendly choices that support sustainability and a smaller environmental impact is emphasized. The study also includes case studies, real-world applications, and a comparison of the efficiencies of conventional and nanotech-driven approaches. Concerns about the hazards that nanomaterials pose to the environment and human health, especially in relation to toxicity, long-term ecological effects, and regulatory gaps, remain despite their potential. In order to ensure safe implementation, the paper discusses these issues and promotes thorough risk assessments and policy frameworks. In the end, incorporating nanotechnology into environmental remediation offers a revolutionary strategy for creating cleaner ecosystems. Nanoremediation is a sustainable frontier that has the potential to greatly advance international environmental protection efforts with continued innovation and interdisciplinary cooperation.

1 Introduction:

One of the most important worldwide issues of the twenty-first century is the growing environmental damage brought on by human activity. Hazardous pollutants have accumulated in natural ecosystems as a result of intensive agriculture, industrial emissions, inappropriate waste disposal, and fast urbanization. The quality of air, water, and soil has been severely harmed by these pollutants, which include heavy metals, dyes, pharmaceuticals, microplastics, pathogenic microorganisms, and persistent organic pollutants (POPs) [1].The ramifications are extensive, encompassing everything from biodiversity loss and ecosystem disruption to detrimental impacts on human health, such as cancer, neurological damage, and respiratory disorders [2]. One of the most important worldwide issues of the twenty-first century is the growing environmental damage brought on by human activity. Hazardous pollutants have accumulated in natural ecosystems as a result of intensive agriculture, industrial emissions, inappropriate waste disposal, and fast urbanization. The quality of air, water, and soil has been severely harmed by these pollutants, which include heavy metals, dyes, pharmaceuticals, microplastics, pathogenic microorganisms, and persistent organic pollutants (POPs)[3]. The ramifications are extensive, encompassing everything from biodiversity loss and ecosystem disruption to detrimental impacts on human health, such as cancer, neurological damage, and respiratory disorders. Conventional environmental remediation strategies such as adsorption using activated carbon, chemical precipitation, incineration, and biological treatment have been employed for decades. But in terms of effectiveness, affordability, selectivity, and long-term viability, these techniques frequently fall short. Many conventional methods either cause incomplete degradation or move pollutants from one phase to another, which leads to secondary environmental problems. There has never been a greater need for creative and efficient remediation techniques as environmental regulations become stricter and public demand for cleaner technologies increases. Nanotechnology has emerged as a revolutionary approach capable of transforming environmental remediation practices [4].Nanomaterials can interact with pollutants at the molecular level because of their special physicochemical characteristics, which include a high surface-area-to-volume ratio, increased catalytic activity, and the capacity to be functionalized. This makes it possible to remove or degrade pollutants more quickly, selectively, and frequently completely [5]. Further connecting nano remediation with sustainability objectives is the creation of green-synthesized nanomaterials, which are made from biological sources like plant extracts and microbes and provide a safe substitute for chemically produced nanoparticles. Recent advancements in nanotechnology have led to the development of a diverse range of nanomaterials including metal and metal oxide nanoparticles (e.g., TiO_2, ZnO, Fe_3O_4), carbon-based materials (e.g., graphene oxide, carbon nanotubes), and polymeric nanostructures that have demonstrated remarkable efficacy in removing a broad spectrum of environmental pollutants [6]. These materials provide versatility across a range of environmental matrices by working through a variety of mechanisms, including adsorption, redox reactions, photocatalysis, and microbial inactivation. The use of nanomaterials in environmental settings presents certain difficulties despite their potential [7]. The possible toxicity, long-term fate, and bioaccumulation of nanoparticles in ecosystems and living things continue to raise concerns. Therefore, thorough risk assessments, life cycle analyses, and the creation of strong regulatory frameworks are necessary for the safe and responsible use of nanotechnology [8].

The purpose of this paper is to present a thorough analysis of the use of nanotechnology in environmental remediation, emphasizing its advantages over traditional techniques, sustainable applications, and potential future developments. This study illustrates the potential of nanotechnology as a revolutionary and ecologically responsible instrument for pollution control and ecosystem restoration by looking at the different kinds of nanomaterials, their modes of action, and real-world case studies.

2 Classification of nanomaterials based on origin

Natural and artificial nanoparticles are the two groups into which nanomaterials are divided based on origin [9].

2.1 Natural nanomaterials

Natural nanomaterials can be found in a variety of forms in nature, including viruses, protein molecules, minerals like clay, natural colloids like milk and blood (liquid colloids), fog (aerosol type), gelatin (gel type), mineralized natural materials like shells, corals, and bones, insect wings and opals, spider silk, lotus leaves, gecko feet, volcanic ash, and ocean spray [10].

2.2 Artificial nanomaterials

Carbon nanotubes and semiconductor nanoparticles like quantum dots (QDs) are examples of artificial nanomaterials that are made consciously using precise mechanical and manufacturing procedures. Nanomaterials are categorized as metal-based materials, dendrimers, or composites depending on their structural makeup [9].

2.3 Classification of nanomaterials based on the structural configuration/composition

According to their structural makeup, nanoparticles can be broadly divided into four groups: organic/dendrimers, inorganic, carbon-based, and composite [11].

2.3.1 Organic nanomaterials

On the nanoscale, organic compounds are converted into organic nanomaterials. As shown in Figure 1 [12]. some examples of organic nanoparticles or polymers are liposomes, dendrimers, micelles, and ferritin. Non-toxic biodegradable nanoparticles known as nano capsule micelles and liposomes have hollow interiors and are sensitive to heat, electromagnetic radiation, and light. The surface of dendrimers is coated with numerous chain ends that can perform specific chemical reactions. Dendrimers are used in molecular recognition, nanosensing, light harvesting, and optoelectrochemical systems. Furthermore, because three-dimensional (3D) dendrimers feature internal holes that can hold additional molecules, they may be useful for drug administration [13].

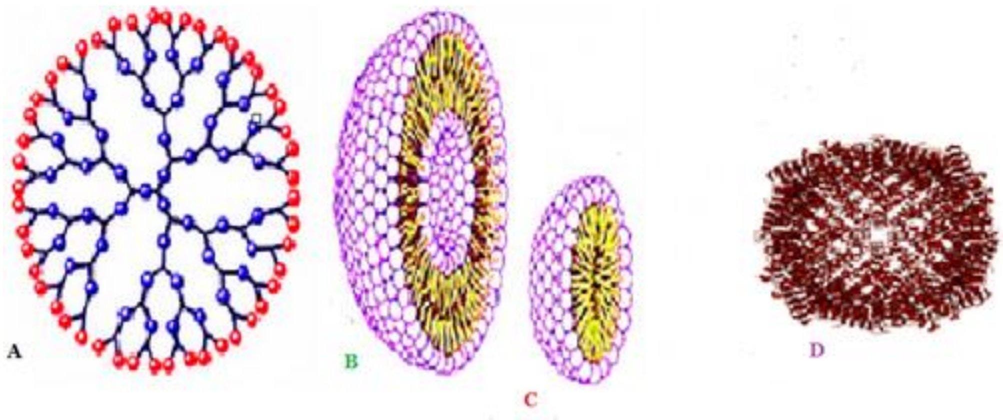

FIGURE 1: The examples that follow consist of organic nanomaterials: A, dendrimers; B, liposomes; C, micelles; D, ferritin [12].

2.3.2 Inorganic nanomaterials

Inorganic nanoparticles are nanoparticles that lack carbon atoms and are known as inorganic nanoparticles. Inorganic nanoparticles are typically classified as those composed of metal-based or metal oxide-based nanomaterials.

2.3.3 Metal-based nanoparticles

Metal-based nanoparticles can be synthesized through destructive or constructive processes. Aluminum (Al), cadmium (Cd), cobalt (Co), copper (Cu), gold (Au), iron (Fe), lead (Pb), silver (Ag), and zinc (Zn) are metal materials that are frequently used in nanoparticle synthesis. Because of their quantum effects and huge surface-to-volume ratio, metal nanoparticles have excellent ultraviolet-visible sensitivity, as well as electrical, catalytic, thermal, and antibacterial properties. Metal nanomaterials are used in a variety of research fields because they have outstanding optical properties.

2.3.4 Metal oxide nanoparticles

Metal oxide nanoparticles, also known as metal oxide nanomaterials, are composed of positive metallic ions and negative oxygen ions. Examples of metal oxide nanoparticles that are frequently synthesized include silicon dioxide (SiO_2), titanium oxide (TiO_2), zinc oxide (ZnO), and aluminum oxide (Al_2O_3). These nanoparticles exhibit remarkable properties compared to their metal analogs [14].

2.3.5 Semiconductor nano materials

Semiconductor nanomaterials exhibit the same properties as metals and insulators. They are classified into three groups.

1. **Concentrated magnetic semiconductor nanomaterials**. It exhibits spontaneous magnetic order and can be a binary compound such as EuTe (anti-ferromagnetic).

2. **Non-magnetic semiconductor nanomaterials**. Nonmagnetic semiconductors that contain no magnetic ions and are used for information processing and communications have had great success using the charge of electrons in semiconductors, but are not used for mass storage of information in dispensable information technology.
3. **Diluted magnetic semiconductor nanomaterials**. The semiconducting materials are made magnetic by adding a few magnetic impurities to the host matrix, in which some of the diamagnetic host cations are randomly replaced by magnetic (TM) cations. These materials not only retain semiconducting properties, but also possess magnetic properties that are a mixture of ordinary and magnetic semiconductors [15].

2.4 Ceramic nanomaterials

Ceramic nanomaterials are inorganic solids made up of carbides, carbonates, oxides, carbides, carbonates, and phosphates synthesized via heat and successive cooling.

The ceramic nanoparticles can be formulated in drug delivery systems, especially in targeting tumors, glaucoma, and some bacterial infections and nanomaterials are also getting great attention from researchers due to their use in applications such as catalysis, photo catalysis, photo degradation of dyes, and imaging applications [16].

2.5 Lipid-based nanomaterials

Lipid-based nanoparticles are generally spherical, with diameters ranging between 10 and 100 nm. It consists of a solid core made of lipids and a matrix containing soluble lipophilic molecules. Lipid-based nanoparticles have applications in the biomedical field as a drug carrier and RNA release therapy in cancer therapy [17].

2.6 Carbon based nano materials

Carbon-based nanomaterials are composed of carbon include five main materials, namely, carbon nanotubes, Graphene, fullerenes, Carbon Nano fiber and Carbon black as shown in Figure 2 Spherical and ellipsoidal nature configured of carbon nanomaterials are referred as fullerenes are called Bucky balls. Fullerenes are the spherical structure with diameters up to 8.2 nm for a single layer and from 4 to 36 nm for multi-layered fullerenes, which form from 28 to 1500 carbon atoms.

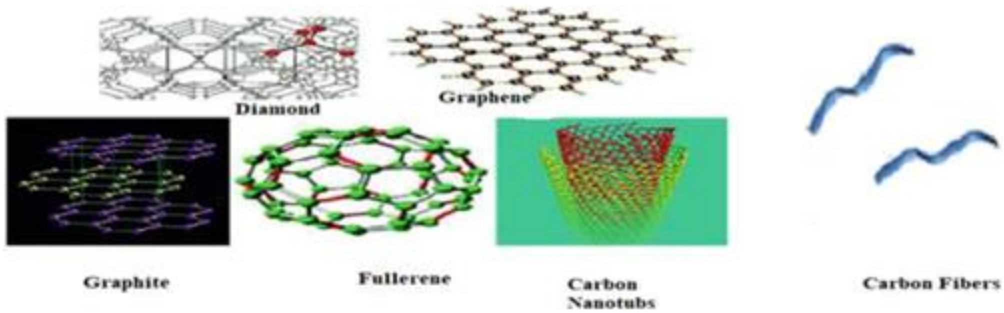

FIGURE 2: Types of carbon-based nanomaterials [15].

Graphene is a hexagonal network of honeycomb lattices made up of carbon atoms on a two-dimensional (2D) planar surface, with the sheet around 1 nm, whereas cylindrical ones are described as nanotubes. Hollow cylinders to form nanotubes with diameters as low as 0.7 nm for a single-layered and 100 nm for a multi-layered carbon nanotube and lengths varying from a few micrometers to several millimeters, the same Graphene Nano fossils are used to produce carbon Nano fiber, and an amorphous material made up of carbon, generally spherical in shape, with diameters from 20 to 70 nm is known as carbon black.] Carbon-based nanomaterials are used mainly for structural reinforcement as they are stronger than steel at times. Carbon-based nanomaterials are thermally conductive along the length and non-conductive across the tube [18].

2.7 Composites nanomaterials

Composites Nanomaterials are made up of nanoparticles combined with other nanoparticles, nanoparticles combined with larger-scale materials, and nanomaterials combined with bulk-type materials. Nanomaterials are already being used to improve mechanical, thermal, and flame-retardant properties in products ranging from auto parts to packaging materials[19].

2.8 Classification:

Nanomaterials are classified into four types based on their size dimensions: 0D, 1D, 2D, and 3D, as shown in Figure 2

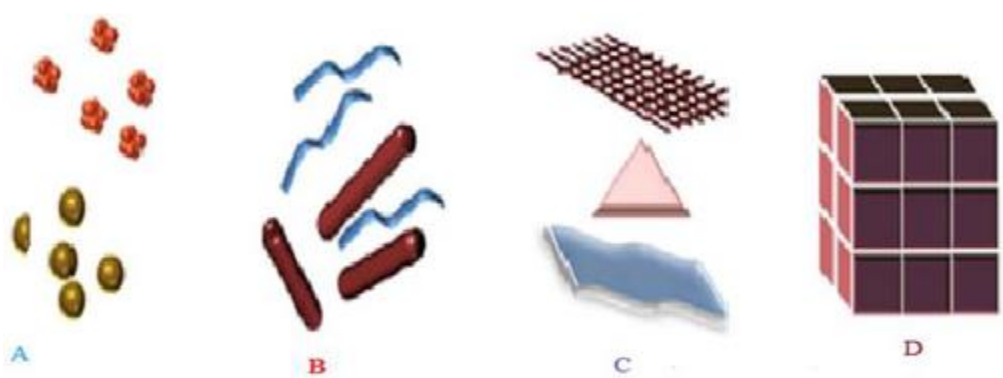

Figure 3: Classification of nanomaterials according to dimension: A, zero-dimensional; B, one-dimensional; C, two-dimensional; D, three-dimensional.

2.8.1 Zero-dimensional nanomaterials

These nanomaterials have all three dimensions (x, y, and z) within the nanoscale range or are not dimensional outside the Nano metric range (>10 nm). QDs, fullerenes, and nanoparticles are examples of 0D nanomaterials. They can be amorphous or crystalline, single crystalline or polycrystalline, exhibit various shapes and forms, and be metallic or ceramic [20].

2.8.2 One-dimensional nanomaterials

ID nanomaterials: Nanomaterials in this class have two of their three dimensions (x, y) in the nanoscale range, but one dimension of the nanostructure is outside the non-metric range (>10 nm). 1D nanomaterials, such as nanofibers, nanotubes, nanohorns, nano rods, thin films, and nanowires, are examples of needle-shaped nanomaterials. They can be amorphous or crystalline, single crystalline or polycrystalline, chemically pure or impure, standalone materials, or embedded within another medium, such as metallic, ceramic, or polymeric. 1D nanoparticles can be metallic, ceramic, or polymeric [21].

2.8.3 Two-dimensional nanomaterials

2D nanomaterials have plate-like shapes with two dimensions outside the nanometer range, but 1D (x) is at the nanoscale (between 1 and 100 nm). Coatings and thin-film multilayers, Nano sheets or nano walls, free particles, tubes, fibers, ultrafine-grained over layers, wires, and platelets are examples of 2D nanomaterials. 2D nanomaterials can be amorphous or crystalline, made of various chemical compositions, deposited on a substrate, or integrated into a surrounding matrix material, metallic, or polymeric [22].

2.8.4 Three-dimensional nanomaterials

3D nanomaterials or bulk materials are nanomaterials that are not confined to the nanoscale in any dimension or dimension range. All dimensions of a 3D material are outside the nanometer range or greater than 100 nm, but the bulk material is made up of individual blocks that are in the nanometer scale (1–100 nm), so 3D nanomaterials have three arbitrary dimensions above 100 nm. It includes nanoparticle dispersion, bundles of nanowires and nanotubes, and multi-nano layers in which the 0D, 1D, and 2D structural elements are in close contact and form interfaces. Thin films with atomic-scale porosity, colloids, and free nanoparticles with various morphologies are examples of 3D nanomaterials [23].

2.9 Top-down method

The top-down method, also known as a destructive method, decomposes bulk materials into smaller materials, which then transform into nanomaterials. Lithography, mechanical milling or ball milling, laser ablation, sputtering, electron explosion, arc discharge, and thermal decomposition are examples of the top-down method [24].

2.9.1 Mechanical milling method

Mechanical milling is the most widely used top-down method for producing various nanoparticles. It is used in the manufacture of oxide- and carbide-strengthened aluminum alloys, wear-resistant spray coatings, aluminum/nickel/magnesium/copper-based nano alloys, and a variety of other nano composite materials.

2.9.2 Nanolithography method

It is the process of printing a required shape or structure on a light-sensitive material and selectively removing a portion of the material to create the desired shape and structure. Lithography is a practical method for creating nanoarchitectures with a concentrated electron or light beam. The main advantages of nanolithography are its ability to produce a cluster with the desired shape and size from a single nanoparticle. The disadvantages are the requirement for complex equipment and the associated costs.

2.9.3 Laser ablation method

Laser ablation synthesis generates nanoparticles by striking the target material with a powerful laser beam. Metal atoms vaporize in a laser ablation experiment and are immediately solvated by surfactant molecules to form nanoparticles in the solution.

2.9.4 Sputtering method

Sputtering is the phenomenon of nanoparticle deposition using ejected particles colliding with ions. Sputtering is typically defined as the deposition of a thin layer of nanoparticles followed by annealing.

2.9.5 Thermal decomposition method

The breakdown was caused by heat. This process is endothermic. The chemical bonds are broken and divided into smaller ones by heat. The metal is broken down at particular temperatures to form the nanoparticles, which are subsequently produced by a chemical reaction.

2.9.6 The arc discharge method

This technique can be used to create a variety of nanostructured materials. Fullerenes, carbon nanohorns (CNHs), carbon nanotubes, few-layer graphene (FLG), and amorphous spherical carbon nanoparticles are some of the carbon-based materials produced. This method is extremely important in the production of fullerene nanomaterials [25].

2.10 Bottom-up method

The bottom-up method, also known as the constructive method, involves the building of material from atoms to clusters to nanoparticles. CVD, sol-gel, spinning, pyrolysis, and biological synthesis are all examples of bottom-up methods [26].

2.10.1 Sol-gel method

It is the process by which a suitable chemical solution serves as a precursor. Metal oxide and chloride are common sol-gel method precursors. Metal oxides and chlorides are the most common sol-gel precursors.

2.10.2 Spinning method

The synthesis of nanoparticles by spinning is carried out by a spinning disc reactor (SDR). It consists of a rotating disc contained within a chamber or reactor where physical parameters such as temperature can be controlled. It is determined by several factors, including disc surface, liquid/precursor ratio, disc rotation speed, liquid flow rate, and feed location. Magnetic nanoparticles were created using spinning disc processing [24].

2.10.3 Chemical vapor deposition (CVD) method

CVD is the deposition of a thin film of gaseous reactants onto a substrate. When a heated substrate comes into contact with a combined gas, a chemical reaction occurs. This reaction forms a thin film of product on the substrate surface, which is recovered and reused. The disadvantages of CVD are the requirement of special equipment and the fact that the gaseous by-products are highly toxic [27].

2.10.4 Pyrolysis method

Pyrolysis is the most commonly used process in industries for the large-scale production of nanoparticles. The advantages of pyrolysis are that it is simple, efficient, cost-effective and a continuous process with high yield [25].

2.10.5 Solvothermal and hydrothermal methods

This method produces nanostructured materials through a heterogeneous reaction carried out in an aqueous hydrothermal method. Hydrothermal and solvothermal methods are typically used in closed systems. Hydrothermal and solvothermal methods are useful for producing various nano geometries of materials such as nanowires, nanorods, nano sheets, and nano spheres.

2.10.6 Soft and hard templating methods

Soft and hard template methods are extensively used to produce nanoporous materials. The soft template method is a simple conventional method for the generation of nanostructured materials. In this method, nano porous materials are produced using plenty of soft templates, such as block copolymers, flexible organic molecules, and anionic, cationic, and non-ionic surfactants [28].

2.11 Applications of Nanotechnology in Environmental Remediation

Zeolites in combination with silver have been utilized since the early 1980s due to their unique porous structure, which allows silver ions to be embedded and gradually released through ion exchange with surrounding cations in solution. This slow release of silver ions makes them effective antimicrobial agents, widely used in sanitation and water disinfection applications. Products like Agion® demonstrate the antibacterial efficiency of such materials by releasing silver ions when in contact with liquids, effectively inhibiting microbial growth. Studies, including those by Egger et al. and Petrik et al., have validated the use of silver-loaded zeolites for water treatment purposes. Moreover, the Water Research Commission has highlighted the innovative use of zeolites as platforms for silver nanoparticles in disinfectants. Advancements have also led to the development of nanozeolites, as demonstrated by researchers like Tiwari and Jung, who applied them in wastewater treatment systems.

Alongside zeolites, carbon nanotubes (CNTs) and nanometals are also prominent nanoadsorbents for heavy metal removal. While CNTs offer strong adsorption capabilities for polar organic compounds, their high production cost and the need for additional filtration systems limit widespread use. In contrast, zeolites and nanometals are more cost-effective and compatible with existing treatment technologies, often used in pellet or bead forms. Polymeric nanoadsorbents are a newer class of materials showing significant promise, as they can simultaneously remove heavy metals and organic contaminants [29].However, the complexity and high cost of producing polymeric dendrimers pose a challenge to their commercial scalability. Overall, each nanoadsorbent type offers unique advantages, and their practical application depends on balancing effectiveness, cost, and compatibility with treatment infrastructure [30].

2.12 Soil remediation:

The application of in situ technique is widely used in soil remediation. The technologies used for remediation of contaminants in soil are mainly adsorption, immobilization, Fenton and Fenton-like oxidation, reduction reaction and multiple combination of nanotechnology and bioremediation. The mechanism of combination of nanotechnology and bioremediation has arisen a great concern in recently [31]. Table 1 below has presented a summary of nanomaterials and nanotechnology applied for in situ removal of contaminants from soils, where the contaminants include heavy metals, organic compound and metalloids. The inorganic contaminants such as heavy metals and metalloid were typically removed through the adsorption process by nanoparticles, while the organic contaminants were removed through reduction reaction and degradation with the presence of catalyzes. With the implementation of nanomaterials, the process of adsorption and oxidation were able to degrade as well as remove the micro-pollutants that retained in soil environment. The applications of nanotechnology in soil remediation that are widely used in removing the contaminants include the carbon nanomaterials, Iron (III) oxide (Fe3O4), Titanium oxide (TiO2), Zinc oxide (ZnO), nanoscale zero-valent iron (nZVI) and nanocomposites. Among the nanomaterials, nZVI was the most common used of nanoparticles in removing the heavy metal pollutants due to the high efficiency of nZVI in eliminating the contaminants such as toxic metals, chlorinated organic compounds and inorganic compound into less harmful compounds [31]. Furthermore, the combination of carboxymethyl cellulose stabilizer with nZVI was reported to have high capacity in converting most of the Chromium (VI) contaminants into carbonate-bound as well as Iron-Manganese oxides-bound, where the bioavailability and leachability of Chromium will be by 50% at a condition of 1 g to 10 mL of soil to solution [32]. The combination of carboxymethyl cellulose stabilizer and nZVI was also reported to have great efficiency in removing the organic contaminants such as DDT, TCE and pesticides from soil column. For instance, 44% of TCE was dechlorinated within 30-hours treatment period through the injection of CMC-stabilized nZVI into the potting soil with 9.2% of organic matter in soil with the injection of 20% aqueous nZVI 1 kg of soil, 25% of DDT was removed in 1 kg of soil which containing 24 mg of DDT per kg soil within 72-hours. In order to enhance the reaction activity of nZVI, higher amount of nZVI was needed to remediate the soils that contaminated for long period of time [33].

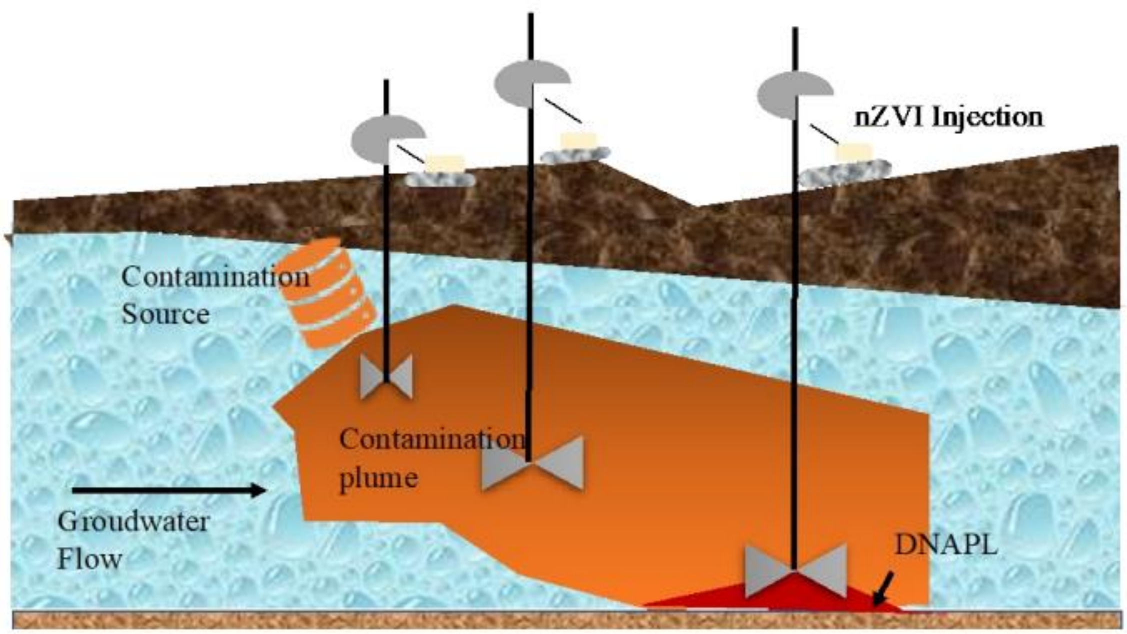

Figure 4: Injection of nZVI for in situ soil remediation

2.13 Nanomembranes for remediation of environmental pollution

Nanomembranes, a product of advancing science and technology, are ultra-thin synthetic membranes (less than 100 nm thick) with a high surface area-to-volume ratio, making them effective tools for environmental remediation. They come in various shapes and are engineered with unique pore structures suitable for separating polymers, fibers, and biomolecules. Widely used in environmental engineering, nanomembranes aid in desalination, industrial wastewater treatment, and air purification. Compared to traditional methods, nanofiltration and reverse osmosis using nanomembranes are more effective in removing salts, multivalent ions, and harmful microorganisms [34].Different types of nanomembranes include carbon nanotube membranes, nanobiomembranes, nanocomposite membranes, and polymer nanomembranes. They not only filter but also help chemically decompose organic pollutants. One-dimensional nanomaterials like nanotubes and nanofibers enhance filtration performance, especially for specific dyes and acids. Zeolite-based nanomembranes (e.g., ZSM-5) are also widely used for aqueous separations. Integrating nanotechnology with conventional systems, such as in ultra-low pressure reverse osmosis (ULPRO), improves filtration efficiency and reduces membrane fouling.

Nanomembranes are also applied in food processing and the separation of metals like copper from water. Modified ceramic membranes and dendrimer-enhanced filters offer cost-effective alternatives with high efficiency. Overall, nanomembranes present a promising solution for environmental challenges and are likely to play a crucial role in future remediation strategies [35].

2.14 Mechanism action:

Adsorption, photocatalysis, redox reactions, and pathways aided by nanobiotechnology are some of the main mechanisms by which nanomaterials used in environmental remediation work. One of the most widely used processes is adsorption, in which pollutants attach to the large surface area of nanomaterials via chemical or physical interactions. For the purpose of purifying water and air, materials like carbon nanotubes, zeolites, and graphene-based structures efficiently capture organic pollutants, heavy metals, and dyes. In photocatalysis, semiconductor nanoparticles such as zinc oxide (ZnO) or titanium dioxide (TiO_2) are activated by ultraviolet or visible light. These substances create electron-hole pairs that result in reactive oxygen species (ROS), like hydroxyl radicals, which break down toxic organic compounds into non-toxic byproducts like carbon dioxide and water. Nanomaterials like zero-valent iron (nZVI) function as reducing or oxidizing agents in redox reactions, changing the oxidation states of pollutants. For instance, they can dechlorinate compounds to break them down or change toxic chromium (VI) into less dangerous chromium (III). Finally, to improve bioremediation, nanobiotechnology-assisted pathways combine nanomaterials with biological systems like microorganisms, enzymes, or plant extracts. These hybrid systems frequently improve the overall effectiveness of the remediation process by facilitating the microbial degradation of pollutants or the environmentally friendly synthesis of nanoparticles. When combined, these mechanisms provide effective and adaptable solutions for challenging environmental issues [36].

2.15 Advantages of nanotechnology

Nanotechnology is a very promising and effective way to address pollution because it has many benefits for environmental remediation. Its high efficiency and selectivity are among its most noteworthy advantages. Even at low concentrations, nanomaterials can quickly and precisely target particular contaminants, including heavy metals, organic pollutants, and pathogens, thanks to their large surface area and special surface chemistry. When compared to traditional methods, this results in cleanup procedures that are quicker and more efficient [37].The potential for in situ application, which enables the direct application of nanomaterials to contaminated sites, like soil or groundwater, without the need for excavation or transportation, is another important benefit. This minimizes environmental disturbance and lowers operating costs. Additionally, because many nanomaterials can function without producing hazardous byproducts or requiring excessive chemical use, nanotechnology helps to reduce secondary pollution. Finally, green technologies like solar-assisted photocatalysis and plant-based synthesis techniques can be successfully combined with nanotechnology. Nanotechnology is a cutting-edge approach to cleaning up contaminated ecosystems because of this integration, which supports sustainable remediation techniques that complement environmental conservation objectives [38].

2.16 Challenges of Nanotechnology in Environmental Remediation

The use of nanomaterials into environmental remediation systems presents complex issues, particularly regarding their possible toxicity and environmental consequences. Although nanoparticles are highly effective in removing and breaking down pollutants, their inherent physicochemical features might potentially have negative impacts on ecosystems and human. health. There have been recorded cases of cytotoxicity, genotoxicity, and oxidative stress, which have raised significant concerns about their ecological consequences. Furthermore, the intricate changes and interplays of nanomaterials in environmental contexts require thorough risk assessment procedures to understand their future outcomes and their ecological impacts. To tackle these issues, it is necessary to combine many fields of study in order to understand the ways in which nanomaterials might be harmful, evaluate how long they remain in the environment, and create plans to minimize risks and assure the safe use of nanotechnology in environmental cleanup [39].

2.16.1 Scalability and Cost-Effectiveness of Nanotechnology-Based Remediation Technologies

The progression from small-scale experiments in the laboratory to the actual use of nanotechnology-based remediation solutions faces significant obstacles in terms of scalability and cost-efficiency. Although laboratory studies confirm the effectiveness of nanomaterials in removing and degrading pollutants, the challenge is in scaling up manufacturing while maintaining consistent quality. Furthermore, the significant capital expenditure needed for infrastructure, manufacturing procedures, and quality assurance protocols contributes to the economic obstacles in expanding the use of nanotechnology-based remediation [40]. To tackle these problems, it is necessary to conduct research efforts focused on creating efficient techniques for producing nanotechnology-based remediation solutions on a large scale. This includes optimising manufacturing processes and finding cost-effective strategies to make these technologies commercially viable and accessible [41].

2.16.2 Regulatory Obstacles and Considerations for Compliance:

Dealing with the regulatory framework that governs the use of nanotechnology in environmental restoration involves complex difficulties, which are marked by fragmented legislation, imprecise standards, and shifting norms. Regulatory bodies face challenges in assessing the safety and effectiveness of nanomaterials due to their complex nature. They typically lack standardised procedures for evaluating risks and granting regulatory approval. Furthermore, the lack of explicit instructions for the environmental discharge, disposal, and monitoring of nanomaterials intensifies the uncertainty in regulations and hinders the use of nanotechnology-based remediation methods. To tackle these difficulties, it is imperative for academics, legislators, industry stakeholders, and regulatory agencies to work together in order to create strong regulatory frameworks, implement uniform processes for risk assessment, and guarantee adherence to environmental standards (40). By tackling these difficulties, individuals or groups with an interest or concern in the matter may promote the conscientious and enduring incorporation of nanotechnology into methods of restoring the environment, so reducing the risks posed by pollution while protecting the health of both the environment and humans [42].

With a number of new trends that will influence its advancement, nanotechnology in environmental remediation appears to have a bright future. The potential applications of smart nanomaterials and artificial intelligence (AI) are among the most intriguing. By anticipating pollutant behavior and modifying nanomaterial interactions in real time, artificial intelligence (AI) can improve remediation processes and increase the efficiency of nanomaterial design. More focused and efficient pollution control may be possible with smart nanomaterials, which can react dynamically to changes in the environment. The move to environmentally friendly and biodegradable nanotechnologies is another significant development. By making nanomaterials naturally decompose after use, these innovations seek to lessen the long-term ecological impact of nanomaterials and lower the possibility of nanoparticle accumulation in the environment. For nanotechnology to be widely adopted, it will be essential to integrate it into environmental regulations and cultivate public acceptance in addition to technological advancements. Transparent communication, safety standards, and well-defined regulatory frameworks will all contribute to the responsible and efficient use of nanomaterials. Lastly, interdisciplinary cooperation for innovation will be essential to nano remediation's future success. Researchers can address complex environmental challenges, scale up production, and develop more efficient solutions by bringing together experts from a variety of fields, including science, engineering, environmental policy, and industry. This will pave the way for a more sustainable future [43].

2.17 Conclusion:

To sum up, nanotechnology has the potential to completely transform environmental cleanup by providing incredibly effective, accurate, and scalable ways to fight pollution. Even at extremely low concentrations, nanomaterials can efficiently target and remove pollutants from air, water, and soil thanks to their special qualities, which include a large surface area, high reactivity, and adaptability. This creates room for more efficient remediation techniques, like eliminating organic pollutants, heavy metals, and pathogens. A more sustainable approach to environmental protection is also offered by developments in biodegradable nanomaterials, which decompose naturally after use, and smart nanomaterials, which can react dynamically to environmental conditions.However, it is imperative that we stress the significance of sustainability as we seek to fully utilize nanotechnology. Long-term environmental objectives must guide the development of nanomaterials to ensure that, after their remediation function is finished, they are safe for ecosystems in addition to being efficient at cleaning pollutants. In order to reduce the risk of accumulation and environmental damage, nanomaterials must be carefully designed.

The development and application of nanotechnology must be done responsibly going forward. This entails establishing precise legal frameworks, guaranteeing safety requirements, and cultivating public confidence. To guarantee that nanotechnology is applied in an ethical and efficient manner, scientists, legislators, businesses, and communities must work together. By adhering to these guidelines, we can make sure that nanotechnology is a major factor in solving the environmental problems facing the globe and providing creative, long-lasting solutions for a healthier, cleaner planet. Nanotechnology has the potential to make a substantial contribution to environmental restoration and preservation for future generations with careful planning and cooperative efforts.

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