

within a holder placed above the tank. For depuration, 45 litres of tap water were used. The experiment was carried out at ambient temperature (29°C~30°C). Approximately, 100 medium sized clams were arranged in monolayer on a plastic mesh rack which was suspended 15 cm above, from the tank bottom to prevent re-contamination from the faecal material settled at the bottom. About 10~15 shellfish were taken out at various intervals of 0 h, 6 h, 12 h, 24 h, 48 h and 72 h using a sterile spatula. Then total coliforms, faecal coliforms, total heterotrophic bacteria and *Vibrio* spp count were enumerated as described above Sections 4.3.1 to 4.3.4. Clams survived well throughout the experiment, however, any dead ones if found were removed from the system immediately. Clams were not fed during the entire period of depuration process.

Author's contributions

Mohamed Hatha conceptualised the work plan, designed the depuration system, reviewed the results and reviewed the manuscript. Kavya, Raj and Suresh carried out the lab work. Kavya also involved in developing the manuscript.

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