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## Regular Article

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Essam A. Mohamed, Ali Q. Selim, Ahmed M. Zayed, Sridhar Komarneni, Mohamed Mobarak, Moaaz K. Seliem

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**Enhancing adsorption capacity of Egyptian diatomaceous earth by thermo-chemical  
purification: Methylene blue uptake**

Essam A. Mohamed<sup>a</sup>, Ali Q. Selim<sup>a</sup>, Ahmed M. Zayed<sup>a</sup>, Sridhar Komarneni<sup>b</sup>, Mohamed  
Mobarak<sup>c</sup>, Moaaz K. Seliem<sup>a,\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Geology Department, Faculty of Science, Beni-Suef University, Egypt

<sup>b</sup> Department of Ecosystem Science and Management, Materials Research Laboratory,  
Materials Research Institute, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 16802,  
USA

<sup>c</sup> Physics Department, Faculty of Science, Beni-Suef University, 621 Egypt

**Abstract**

In the current study, calcination and thermo-chemical methods were applied in treatment of the processed diatomite fraction ( $< 45\mu\text{m}$ ), which containing nearly 82.6 wt. % of the raw Egyptian diatomaceous earth. The untreated and modified diatomite fractions were characterized by optical microscopy (OM), X-ray fluorescence (XRF), X-ray diffraction (XRD), scanning electron microscopy (SEM) and Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (FT-IR). Thermo-chemical purification produced the highest concentration of diatom frustules ( $> 92\%$   $\text{SiO}_2$ ) without blocking impurities and created  $-\text{Si}-\text{O}-\text{Si}-$  active sites. These fractions were tested for Methylene blue (MB) adsorption at different pH solutions (2.0 – 10.0). The purified diatomite via thermo-chemical treatment (PD) gave the greatest adsorption capacity for MB compared to the untreated (UD) and calcinated (CUD) diatomite fractions. Effects of experimental parameters such as MB concentration ( $60\text{--}200\text{ mg L}^{-1}$ ), contact time (5–480 min), adsorbent mass (50–250 mg) and temperature (30–55 °C) on MB uptake were investigated. Linear and non-linear forms of Langmuir, Freundlich and Dubinin–Radushkevich (D–R) models indicated that Langmuir model with a maximum adsorption capacity ( $q_{\text{max}} = 105.03\text{ mg g}^{-1}$ ) fitted well the adsorption data.

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