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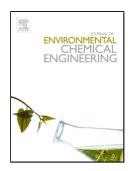
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## ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

# Understanding Lignin Depolymerization to Phenols via Microwave-Assisted Solvolysis Process

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### **Graphical Abstract**

#### **Highlights**

- Microwaves converted alkali lignin to phenolics at low temperatures (100-140°C)
- Reaction media constituted a homogeneous phase with solvents of varying polarity
- Time evolution of molecular weight distribution of lignin and phenolics were studied
- Phenolics include acetosyringone, guaiacol, syringaldehyde, anisole and lignin dimers
- Maximum phenolic yield (20 wt.%) was obtained with DMSO and DMF at 100°C

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