

Index

<i>Declaration.....</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>Acknowledgements.....</i>	<i>ii</i>
<i>Index.....</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>List of Figures.....</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>List of Tables.....</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>List of Abbreviations and Symbols.....</i>	<i>xiii</i>
<i>Abstract.....</i>	<i>xv</i>
<i>Chapter 1 - Literature Review.....</i>	<i>1</i>
1.1. Introduction.....	2
1.2. Soil salinity and land degradation.....	3
1.2.1. Salinity distribution around the world – India – Gujarat.....	4
1.3. Effect of salt stress on plant growth.....	8
1.3.1. Strategies adapted by plants against salt stress.....	10
1.4. Importance of legume crops in arid and semi-arid regions.....	11
1.5. Importance of PGPR for stress tolerance in plants.....	12
1.6. Biotic stress.....	15
1.7. Biocontrol effect of the PGPR.....	15
1.8. Importance of developing PGPR consortia.....	16
1.8.1. Importance of consortia in stress alleviation.....	17
1.9. Scope of the thesis.....	19
Objectives.....	20
<i>Chapter 2 - Effect of salt stress on PGPR traits of PGPR strains individually and in consortia.....</i>	<i>22</i>
2.1. Introduction.....	23
2.2. Materials and Methods.....	24
2.2.1. Maintenance of microbial cultures and growth conditions.....	24
2.2.2. Molecular identification of isolates.....	26
2.2.3. Preparation of bacterial inoculum.....	27
2.2.4. Compatibility among the strains for consortia preparation.....	27
2.2.5. Primary screening for salt stress tolerance of bacteria under study.....	27

2.2.6. Effect of salt stress on plant growth promoting traits of the bacteria.....	27
2.2.6.1. IAA production.....	28
2.2.6.2. Siderophore production.....	28
2.2.6.3. Biofilm formation.....	29
2.2.6.4. Phosphate solubilization.....	29
2.2.6.5. HCN production.....	29
2.2.6.6. Ammonia Production.....	30
2.2.7. Antifungal activity.....	30
2.2.8. Consortium preparation.....	30
2.2.9. Characterization of siderophores.....	31
2.2.10. Consortial synergy under iron-deficient conditions.....	32
2.2.11. Statistical analysis.....	32
2.3. Results.....	32
2.3.1. Identification of bacterial isolates based on 16S rRNA sequencing.....	32
2.3.2. Consortial compatibility among bacterial strains.....	34
2.3.3. Salt Tolerance of PGPR strains.....	34
2.3.4. PGPR activity under salt stress – Individual strains vs Consortia.....	35
2.3.4.1. IAA Production.....	35
2.3.4.2. Siderophore production.....	37
2.3.4.2.1. Identification of siderophore types.....	39
2.3.4.2.2. Siderophore cross utilization assay.....	39
2.3.4.3. Biofilm production.....	40
2.3.4.4. Phosphate solubilization activity.....	42
2.3.4.5. HCN production.....	45
2.3.4.6. Ammonia production.....	45
2.3.5. Biocontrol activity.....	46
2.4. Discussion.....	50
<i>Chapter 3 - Functioning and compatibility of the PGPR consortia in presence of multiple abiotic stresses using PCR based approach.....</i>	<i>55</i>
3.1. Introduction.....	56
3.2. Materials and Methods.....	57
3.2.1. PGPR consortia.....	57

3.2.2. Bacterial growth in phosphate starved conditions and salt stress.....	58
3.2.3. Quantification of the released inorganic phosphate.....	58
3.2.4. Designing of strain specific primers based on 16S rRNA gene sequence.....	58
3.2.5. DNA extraction from individual strains and mixed consortia.....	59
3.2.6. PCR amplification and semi-quantitative estimation.....	60
3.2.7. Bacterial growth under salt stress - Quantitative PCR assay.....	61
3.2.7.1. PGPR growth under salt stress.....	61
3.2.7.2. Standard Preparation.....	61
3.2.7.2. Q-PCR analysis for bacterial growth establishment.....	63
3.3. Results.....	64
3.3.1. Phosphate solubilization-individual PGPR strains under salt stress.....	64
3.3.1.1. Phosphate solubilization - PGPR consortia under salt stress.....	66
3.3.2. Bacterial growth under P-deficiency and salt stress.....	67
3.3.2.1. Growth of consortia under phosphate deficiency and salt stress.....	69
3.3.3. Semi-quantitative estimation of individual bacterial populations using genus specific primers.....	70
3.3.4. Population dynamics of PGPR consortia in rich medium under NaCl stress.....	73
3.3.4.1. Effect of salt stress on the bacterial consortia.....	74
3.3.4.2. Population density in consortia based on copy number values.....	75
3.4. Discussion.....	79
<i>Chapter 4 - Plant inoculation studies with PGPR consortia for salinity and stress biotic with Cajanus cajan.....</i>	<i>83</i>
4.1. Introduction.....	84
4.2. Materials and Methods.....	86
4.2.1. Surface sterilization and seed germination.....	86
4.2.1.2. Effect of salt stress on seed germination.....	87
4.2.2. Preparation of microbial inoculants for plant assays.....	87
4.2.3. Plant inoculation studies for alleviation of salt stress.....	87
4.2.3.1. Preparation of soil samples.....	87
4.2.3.2. Seed inoculation and plant growth.....	88
4.2.4. Determination of plant growth parameters.....	88

4.2.5. Plant inoculation studies for biotic stress alleviation.....	91
4.2.5.1. Soil preparation and seed inoculation.....	91
4.2.6. Growth assessment for biotic stress tolerance in plants.....	91
4.2.7. Statistical analysis.....	91
4.3. Results.....	92
4.3.1. Pigeon pea seed growth under salt stress.....	92
4.3.2. Soil analysis.....	93
4.3.3. Effect of PGPR treatment on Abiotic stress in plants – Pot Studies.....	94
4.3.3.1. Assessment of plant physical parameters.....	94
4.3.3.1.1. Shoot and Root development.....	95
4.3.3.1.2. Total biomass content.....	95
4.3.3.1.3. Salt tolerance index (STI).....	96
4.3.3.1.4. Biomass allocation.....	97
4.3.3.1.5. Moisture content.....	98
4.3.3.1.6. Soil Electrical conductivity (EC).....	99
4.3.3.1.7. Leaf growth estimation.....	100
4.3.3.2. Biochemical parameters for plant growth and stress alleviation.....	101
4.3.3.2.1. Total proteins.....	101
4.3.3.2.3 Total soluble sugars (TSS).....	103
4.3.3.2.4. Carotenoids.....	103
4.3.3.2.5. Chlorophyll content.....	104
4.3.4. Tolerance towards Biotic stress due to PGPR treatment.....	105
4.4. Discussion.....	109
<i>Summary & Conclusions.....</i>	<i>115</i>
<i>Appendix.....</i>	<i>119</i>
Appendix-I.....	120
Microbiological media composition.....	120
Reagents.....	122
Appendix-II.....	127
Q-PCR Studies – Ct value graph for copy number determination.....	127
Standard Graphs.....	128
Appendix-III.....	130
<i>Bibliography.....</i>	<i>131</i>
<i>Publications & Presentations.....</i>	<i>163</i>