Photocatalytic Degradation of Nd₂O₃@SiO₂ Core-Shell Nanocomposites Under UV Irradiation Against Methylene Blue and Rhodamine B Dyes

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Abstract : Over the past years, industrial dyes have emerged as a significant threat to aquatic life, extensively detected in drinking water and groundwater, thus contributing to water pollution due to their improper and excessive use. To address this issue, the utilization of core-shell structures has been prioritized as it demonstrates remarkable efficiency in utilizing light energy for catalytic reactions and exhibiting excellent photocatalytic activity despite the availability of various photocatalysts. This work focuses on the photocatalytic degradation of Nd₂O₃@SiO₂ CSNs under UV light irradiation against MB and RhB dyes. Different characterization techniques, including XRD, FTIR, and TEM analyses, were employed to reveal the material's structure, functional groups, and morphological features. VSM and XPS analyses confirmed the soft, paramagnetic nature and chemical states with respective atomic percentages, respectively. Optical band gaps, determined using the Tauc plot model, indicated 4.24 eV and 4.13 eV for Nd₂O₃ NPs and Nd₂O₃@SiO₂ CSNs, respectively. The reduced bandgap energy of Nd₂O₃@SiO₂ CSNs enhances light absorption in the UV range, potentially leading to improved photocatalytic efficiency. The Nd₂O₃@SiO₂ CSNs exhibited greater degradation efficiency, reaching 95% and 96% against MB and RhB dyes, while Nd₂O₃ NPs showed 90% and 92%, respectively. The enhanced efficiency of Nd₂O₃@SiO₂ CSNs can be attributed to the larger specific surface area provided by the SiO₂ shell, as confirmed by surface area analysis using the BET surface area analyzer through N₂ adsorption.

Keywords : core shell nanocomposites, rare earth oxides, photocatalysis, advanced oxidation process

Conference Title : ICHPN 2024 : International Conference on Heterogeneous Photocatalytic Nanomaterials

Conference Location : Sydney, Australia

Conference Dates : May 16-17, 2024

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