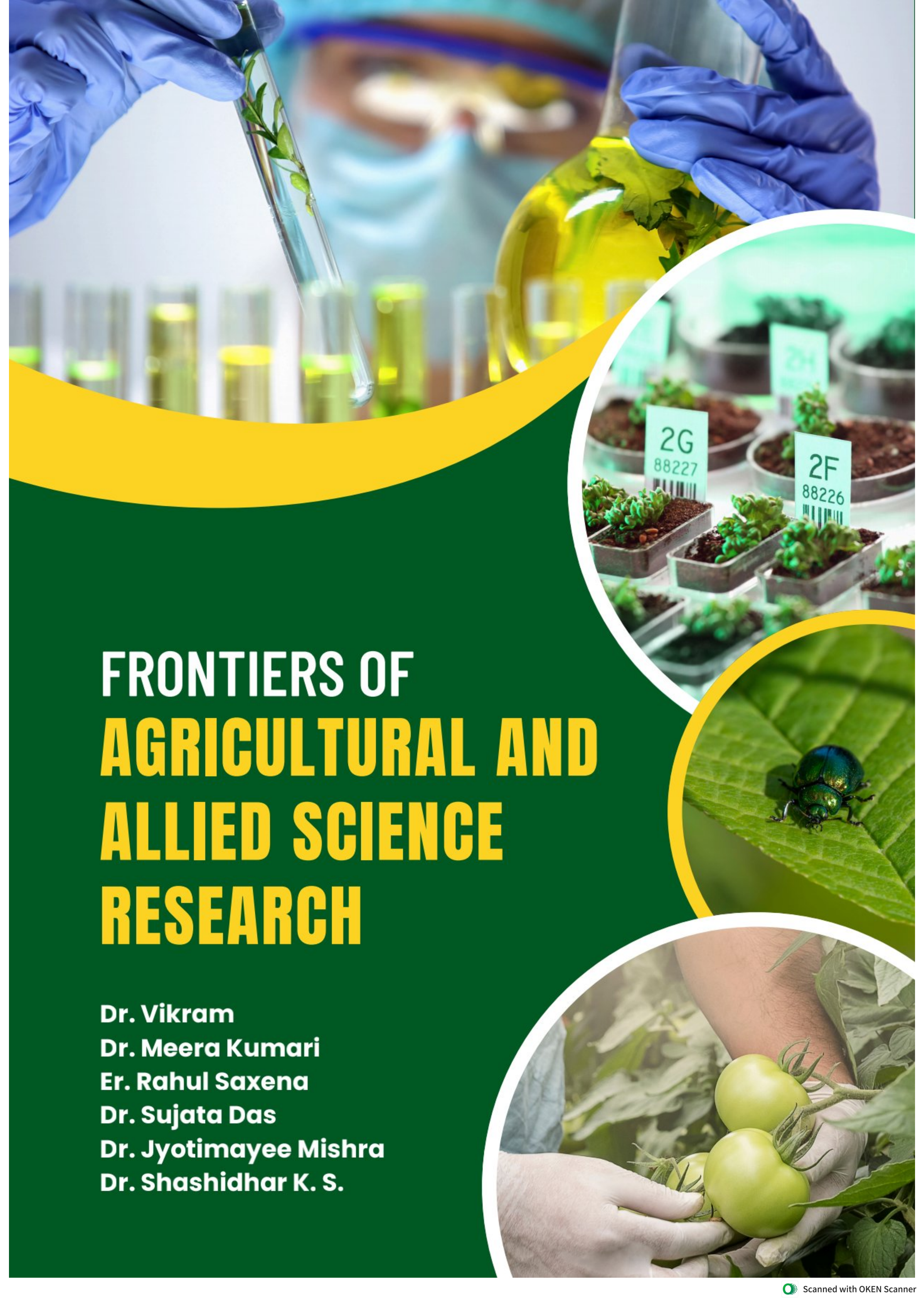




FRONTIERS OF AGRICULTURAL AND ALLIED SCIENCE RESEARCH

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By

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Dr. Jyotimayee Mishra
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Frontiers of Agricultural and Allied Science Research

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Chapter 11

Biological Properties of Soil: Modern Techniques in Soil Microbiology and Ecology

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1. Introduction to Soil Microbiology

Soil is among the most significant and dense pools of biological wealth and riches; in point of acreage, it is the most considerable reservoir of organic carbon after the ocean (Mishra et al., 2023). This microscopic pool of biodiversity, primarily composed of bacteria, fungi, and protists (flagellates, amoeba, various other microflora), is the foundation of the global food web. Despite the susceptibility of soil to urbanization and massive deforestation, little is understood concerning the identity and functioning of the soil microbiome, which significantly impacts the habits of plant and animal communities and the processes of ecosystem cycling, stability, and restoration. Enormous majorly bacterial taxonomic diversity being poorly characterized and accounted for hue, is most masked in heterogeneous soil.

Much lesser is understood regarding the bacterial wealth hidden inside the omnichannel dark soil habitat, with heterogeneous microhabitats harboring complex populations of microbes varying by sheer order of sizes from few nanometers and pico meters (submicroscopic) to 10s of micrometers (macromicroscopic). In comparison to the conventionally explored below ground microbial biomass, smaller-sized and better-distributed soil-borne fuzz (mainly bacteria, archaea, and a portion of fungi) sized <20 micrometers is forecasted to significantly surpass above ground microbial biomass (Lahlali et al., 2021). However, in comparison to above-ground systems and modeled terrestrial ecosystems, much more is relevantly lacking concerning the biotic and abiotic complexities of this colorful zone dark soil habitat and "businesses and habits" of vast hidden and unexplored pools of microbial biodiversity. Assessment of taxonomic diversity is the initial and core part of understanding the structure and processes of soil microbiomes. Concerning this, fantastic advances have been made in recent decades in investigating this soil biodiversity with the advancement of sequencing techniques. The basic and imperative advancement of "high throughput sequencing" techniques to assess bigness and structure has transformed metagenomic research and fueled taxonomic inventories and characterization of ecologically crucial Bacteria and Archaea for ecosystem functioning and greenhouse gas regulation.