



# The Use of Cobalt-Doped Tin(IV) Oxide as a Catalyst for the Photodegradation of Methyl Orange

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## ABSTRACT

Textile industries are always deal with water pollution caused by pigments, one of which is organic compounds. Efforts have been made to treat the polluted water, however the methods still need to be improved. Cobalt-doped tin(IV) oxide ( $\text{Sn}_{1-x}\text{Co}_x\text{O}_2$ ,  $x = 0, 0.0025$  and  $0.005$ ) prepared by a solid state reaction of  $\text{SnO}_2$  powder and cobalt nitrate salt has been introduced to catalysis of methyl orange photodegradation. The catalysts have band gap energy ( $E_g$ ) varied between 1.813 and 3.944 eV, and indicates good responses in both visible and ultraviolet lights, having high potent as photocatalysts on methyl orange degradation. The test indicates the applicability of Langmuir adsorption isotherm for the systems.

## INTRODUCTION

The biggest problem with textile industries, for example, is dyes (Carmen & Daniel 2012). The dyes may poison water organisms, and block sunlight to penetrate water, disturbing the process of photosynthesis. The textile dyes are hardly decomposed causing disruption of water ecosystems for a long period of time (Ito et al. 2016).

The polluted water recovery process is very complicated, high cost and time consuming. The problem is more complex if the dyes settled in the water are toxic, carcinogenic, and mutagenic (Alves de Lima et al. 2007, Jäger et al. 2006). Many dyes are azo compounds which are nondegradable, and endanger living organisms (Cisneros et al. 2002, Ozdemir et al. 2013, Ribeiro & Umbuzeiro 2014). One of the azo dyes used in colouring textile is methyl orange (MO) which is a cationic heterocyclic aromatic compound (Li et al. 2013).

Dye removal from water includes conventional methods such as adsorption using activated carbon or zeolites, and modern methods, such as biodegradation, ozonization, chlorination, ionizing radiation and plasma technology. The conventional methods are less applicable and ineffective to use, while modern methods are usually expensive (Ozdemir et al. 2013, Robinson et al. 2002, Samad et al. 2016, Vidal et al. 2016).

Photodegradation, the environmental friendly and low cost method, may be applied to decompose the dyestuff wastes. Photodegradation may be facilitated by using

photocatalysts. Photocatalysis combines photochemical processes and catalysis. This process includes chemical transformation process using photons as energy sources and catalysts accelerating the rate of transformation. The process is based on the dual capability of a semiconductor material (such as  $\text{TiO}_2$ ,  $\text{ZnO}$ ,  $\text{Fe}_2\text{O}_3$ ,  $\text{CdS}$ ,  $\text{ZnS}$ ) to absorb photons and simultaneously transform the material interface (Banerjee et al. 2014, Ohtani 2011). The use of this photocatalyst has the advantage of being able to totally mineralize the organic pollutants including textile waste (azo compounds), the operational cost is inexpensive with a relatively fast, non-toxic and long-term use, and environmental friendly and reusable (Ohtani 2010). Photocatalyst that is widely used is  $\text{TiO}_2$  due to its high activity and band gap energy of 3.2 eV. The use of  $\text{SnO}_2$  instead of  $\text{TiO}_2$  is of interest (Zheng et al. 2016). The tin oxide photocatalyst having band gap energy of 3.6 eV is enhanced by cobalt oxide so that the catalysts may also work well under visible light (Barakat et al. 2008, Patil 1996, Prodjosantoso et al. 2017a). This stable catalyst may be prepared using arrange of methods, but the high temperature reaction is the simplest and cheapest method (De Almeida et al. 2014).

We are reporting the use of  $\text{Sn}_{1-x}\text{Co}_x\text{O}_2$  ( $x = 0, 0.0025$  and  $0.005$ ) to catalyse the degradation of methyl orange (MO) solution under UV and visible light radiations.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Materials:**  $\text{SnO}_2$  (Merck),  $\text{Co}(\text{NO}_3)_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$  (Merck), and MO

(Sigma-Aldrich) were used as received without any further purification.

**Methods:** A total of 1.5071 grams of SnO<sub>2</sub> was thoroughly mixed with 0.00728 gram (2.5 × 10<sup>-5</sup> mol) Co(NO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>·6H<sub>2</sub>O, and followed by calcination at 900°C for 4 hours. The work was repeated using 0.01455 g (5 × 10<sup>-5</sup> mol) Co(NO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>·6H<sub>2</sub>O. The resulting catalysts were then characterized using UV-Vis Spectroscopy (UV-2450PC Pharmaspec Spectrophotometer) method.

The adsorption behaviour of Sn<sub>1-x</sub>Co<sub>x</sub>O<sub>2</sub> (x = 0, 0.0025 and 0.005) was determined as follows: a set of adsorption test was performed in the dark, in which 10 mL of MO solutions with different initial concentrations were added with 0.1 g of Sn<sub>1-x</sub>Co<sub>x</sub>O<sub>2</sub> (x = 0, 0.0025 and 0.005) powders, and shaken for 24 hours. The MO concentration in the suspensions before and after the adsorption were analysed to determine the amount of MO adsorbed by the catalyst.

The photocatalytic activity of Sn<sub>1-x</sub>Co<sub>x</sub>O<sub>2</sub> (x = 0, 0.0025 and 0.005) was determined by measuring the undecomposed MO after being exposed under visible or UV-light. The initial concentration of MO was 1 × 10<sup>-5</sup> M. The undecomposed MO at given time intervals was measured using a spectrometry at the absorbance of 462 nm.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

UV-Vis spectroscopy method was used to determine the band gap energy of the material, and the absorbances. Prior to the measurements, the Sn<sub>1-x</sub>Co<sub>x</sub>O<sub>2</sub> (x = 0, 0.0025 and 0.005) was dissolved in a mixture of triton-x and acetylacetonate to form a paste, which was then layered on the preparatory glass. Furthermore, the glass was dried in a furnace at a temperature of 450°C for 2 hours to evaporate the solvent.

In this study, measurements were carried out at wavelengths of 200-800 nm. Each sample has absorbed energy at certain wavelength(s) (Table 1).

Table 1: Absorbances of Sn<sub>1-x</sub>Co<sub>x</sub>O<sub>2</sub>.

Sn <sub>1-x</sub> Co <sub>x</sub> O <sub>2</sub> , x =	λ (nm)	
	Visible	UV
0	-	317
0.0025	405	275 and 315
0.005	395	295

Table 2: The band gap energy of Sn<sub>1-x</sub>Co<sub>x</sub>O<sub>2</sub>.

Sn <sub>1-x</sub> Co <sub>x</sub> O <sub>2</sub> , x =	Band Gap Energy (eV)		
	E <sub>g</sub> 1	E <sub>g</sub> 2	E <sub>g</sub> 3
0	3.944	-	-
0.0025	3.819	2.588	1.829
0.005	3.931	2.236	1.813

The Kubelka-Munk equation was used to calculate the band gap energy (E<sub>g</sub>) of catalysts (Yang & Kruse 2004). Table 2 lists the band gap energies of Sn<sub>1-x</sub>Co<sub>x</sub>O<sub>2</sub> (x = 0, 0.0025 and 0.005). The cobalt, which is doped onto SnO<sub>2</sub>, decreases the band gap energy of SnO<sub>2</sub> (3.944 eV) (Prodjosantoso et al. 2017b, Reimann & Steube 1998, Viter et al. 2014). In general, the more cobalt additions provide the lower band gap energy of Sn<sub>1-x</sub>Co<sub>x</sub>O<sub>2</sub> (x = 0, 0.0025 and 0.005).

The Sn<sub>1-x</sub>Co<sub>x</sub>O<sub>2</sub> (x = 0, 0.0025 and 0.005) photocatalyst adsorption test was performed in the dark environment. Prior to adsorption, the measurement of MO absorbance at a wavelength of 462 nm was performed, to obtain a MO standard curve. The adsorption process used 0.05 grams of catalyst of Sn<sub>1-x</sub>Co<sub>x</sub>O<sub>2</sub> (x = 0, 0.0025 and 0.005), and the concentrations of MO were 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 (×10<sup>-6</sup> mol/L). The adsorption of MO by the catalyst was carried out for 24 hours in a closed shaker to obtain a state of equilibrium. Furthermore, the mixture of the degraded solution was centrifuged at a rate of 1500 rpm for 10 minutes to separate the liquid phase from the precipitate. The filtrate was analysed at wavelength of 462 nm to determine the concentration of MO.

The calculation of catalyst adsorption capacity was performed using Langmuir and Freundlich equations (LeVan & Vermeulen 1981). The Langmuir isotherm pattern was determined by correlating the MO concentration adsorbed on every 1 gram of catalyst (c/m) with MO concentration after 24 h (c). The calculation of the adsorption capacity value (b) on the Langmuir isotherm was undertaken using the equation as follows:

$$\frac{c}{m} = \frac{c}{b} + \frac{1}{K_f b} \quad \dots(1)$$

Freundlich isotherm pattern is determined by plotting the log value of the amount of MO adsorbed on every 1 gram of catalyst (log x/m) with the log of MO concentration after 24 hours (log c). The calculation of the adsorption capacity (k) of the Freundlich isotherm was undertaken using equation as follows:

$$\log \frac{x}{m} = \log k + \frac{1}{n} \log c \quad \dots(2)$$

The equations of Langmuir and Freundlich isotherms are presented in Table 3.

The R<sup>2</sup> values of the Langmuir adsorption isotherm pattern are higher than that of the Freundlich. Thus, we can conclude that adsorption on MO degradation by Sn<sub>1-x</sub>Co<sub>x</sub>O<sub>2</sub> catalysts follows Langmuir isotherm pattern. This pattern assumes the monolayer formation of adsorbate on the homogenous adsorbent surface. There is no interaction

Table 3: Equations of Langmuir and Freundlich isotherm patterns of Sn<sub>1-x</sub>Co<sub>x</sub>O<sub>2</sub>.

Sn <sub>1-x</sub> Co <sub>x</sub> O <sub>2</sub> , x =	Langmuir	Freundlich
0	y = 0.77253x - 1.29567R <sup>2</sup> = 0.98349	y = -0.90112x - 12.05405R <sup>2</sup> = 0.93153
0.0025	y = 0.60214x - 1.25004R <sup>2</sup> = 0.96149	y = -1.01961x - 12.62908R <sup>2</sup> = 0.81312
0.005	y = 0.33124x - 0.55717R <sup>2</sup> = 0.98578	y = -2.34525x - 20.64722R <sup>2</sup> = 0.85533

among the adsorbed molecules, i.e. MO.

The adsorption capacity can be calculated using Langmuir isotherm equation, that is the 1/slope of the line equation. The adsorption capacities of the sample is presented in Table 4. The SnO<sub>2</sub> indicates the lowest adsorption capacity. This is due to SnO<sub>2</sub>- supported cobalt oxide having a larger surface and a greater ability to adsorb MO than pure SnO<sub>2</sub>.

The photodegradation was performed using 0.05 gram Sn<sub>1-x</sub>Co<sub>x</sub>O<sub>2</sub> for every 10 mL of 15.63 ppm MO solution. The mixtures were placed in a shaker covered by a closed box equipped with Evaco 20 Watt fluorescent light. Measurements were undertaken at variations of time i.e., 4, 8, 12, 16, 20 and 30 minutes. The absorbances were measured at a wavelength of 462 nm. The absorbances were then referred into the standard MO curve equation to obtain the MO concentration (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. shows that the concentration of MO decreases with increasing exposed time to UV light. This proves that MO degradation is effectively performed by using Sn<sub>1-x</sub>Co<sub>x</sub>O<sub>2</sub> catalysts, under UV light. Fig. 1 also indicates that the SnO<sub>2</sub> catalysed more effectively in degrading the MO compared to Sn<sub>1-x</sub>Co<sub>x</sub>O<sub>2</sub> with x = 0.0025 and 0.005, which is similar to results performed by cobalt(II) oxide supported onto tin(IV) oxide catalysts (Cerri et al. 2005).

Fig. 1., however, also shows that the little MO increase after photodegradation for 80 and 120 minutes. It might be a photolysis product appearing which absorbs at the wavelength where the MO concentration is measured, or it might be a simple error in the measurement. In principle, it also might be the consequence of the liberation of adsorbed MO due to co-adsorption of decomposition products, but the increase in the concentration is well enough.

Photodegradation of MO under visible light was undertaken using the same procedure for MO photodegradation

Table 4: Adsorption Capacity of Sn<sub>1-x</sub>Co<sub>x</sub>O<sub>2</sub>.

Sn <sub>1-x</sub> Co <sub>x</sub> O <sub>2</sub> , x=	Adsorption Capacity (mole/gram)
0	1.29444811
0.0025	1.660743349
0.005	3.018959063

under UV light, but the light source used was Philips ML 100W/220-230E27. The absorbances observed were then referred into the standard MO curve equation to obtain the MO concentration (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2 indicates that the concentration of MO solution is inversely proportional to the exposure time of visible light. The catalysts show a good performance under visible light. The performance of Sn<sub>1-x</sub>Co<sub>x</sub>O<sub>2</sub> with x = 0.005 in degrading MO is better compared to the SnO<sub>2</sub> and Sn<sub>1-x</sub>Co<sub>x</sub>O<sub>2</sub> with x = 0.0025 catalysts.

The reaction order was determined to study the reaction rate kinetics of the MO photodegradation. The largest value of R<sup>2</sup> was used to determine the order of reactions. The zero-order reaction was determined by integrating the equation of the reaction rate, as follows:

$$C_t = -kt + C_0 \quad \dots(3)$$

Where, C<sub>t</sub> is the concentration of MO at time t, k is the rate constant, t is time and C<sub>0</sub> is the initial concentration of MO. By plotting C<sub>t</sub> vs. t, we obtain the equation of the line for the zero-order reaction, and the R<sup>2</sup> value can be determined.

The first-order reaction was determined by integrating the rate of reaction to obtain the equation of the reaction, as follows:

$$\ln(C_t/C_0) = -kt \quad \dots(4)$$

$$\ln C_t = -kt + \ln C_0 \quad \dots(5)$$

By plotting ln C<sub>t</sub> vs. t, we obtain the equation of the line for the first-order reaction, and the R<sup>2</sup> value can be determined.

The second-order reaction was determined by integrating the rate of reaction to obtain the equation of the reaction, as follows:

$$\frac{1}{C_t} = kt + \frac{1}{C_0} \quad \dots(6)$$

By plotting 1/C<sub>t</sub> vs. t, we obtain the equation of the line for the second-order reaction.

By comparing the values of R<sup>2</sup> of the three reaction orders (Table 5), the rate of MO photodegradation reaction using catalysts Sn<sub>1-x</sub>Co<sub>x</sub>O<sub>2</sub> under UV light and visible light is

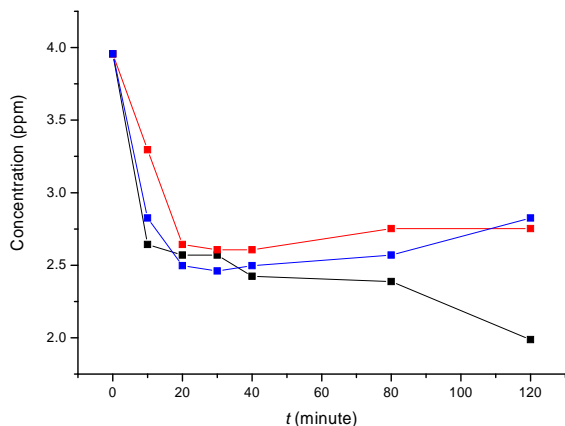


Fig. 1: Photoactivity of Sn<sub>1-x</sub>Co<sub>x</sub>O<sub>2</sub> with x = 0 (black), 0.0025 (red) and 0.005 (blue) on MO photodegradation under UV light.

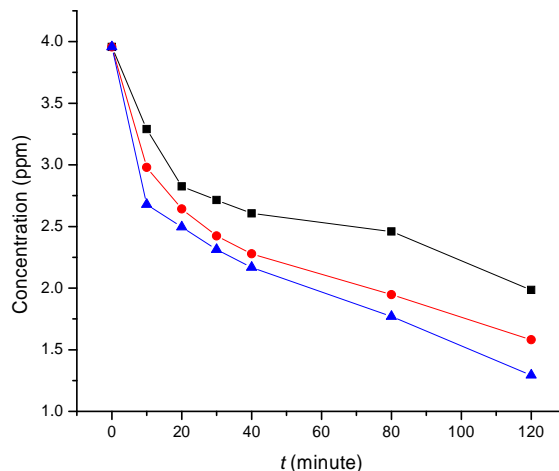


Fig. 2: Photoactivity of Sn<sub>1-x</sub>Co<sub>x</sub>O<sub>2</sub> with x = 0 (black), 0.0025 (red) and 0.005 (blue) on MO photodegradation under visible light.

determined. As the second-order kinetics curve has the highest R<sup>2</sup> value than that of zero and first-order, so the order of the reaction is confirmed to be second-order reaction.

The decrease of the concentration of MO in the degradation process using Sn<sub>1-x</sub>Co<sub>x</sub>O<sub>2</sub>, under UV light and visible light can be seen in Fig. 3.

In the MO degradation experiment using UV irradiation, SnO<sub>2</sub> catalysis is more effective than other catalysts. But, the Sn<sub>1-x</sub>Co<sub>x</sub>O<sub>2</sub> performs conversely, and the Sn<sub>1-x</sub>Co<sub>x</sub>O<sub>2</sub> with x = 0.005 indicates the most effective catalysis compared to the rest of catalysts. This is because the undoped SnO<sub>2</sub> has a band gap energy working only on UV light, while Sn<sub>1-x</sub>Co<sub>x</sub>O<sub>2</sub> works on both UV and visible light.

The photocatalytic reaction takes place in a heterogeneous system and the reaction rate is affected by the adsorbance of the reactants on the surface of the catalyst. Reaction rate can be formulated as follows:

$$r = -\frac{dC}{dt} = \frac{k_{obs} \cdot K \cdot C}{1 + K \cdot C} \quad \dots(7)$$

The reaction rate equation can be simplified into second-order kinetics as follows:

$$\frac{1}{C} = -k_{obs}t + \frac{1}{C_0} \quad \dots(8)$$

Where,  $k_{obs}$  is the total reaction rate constant (min<sup>-1</sup>),  $K$  is the adsorption constant of the reactant and  $C$  is the concentration of the reactant at any time. Kinetic constant  $k_{obs}$  is the rate constant of the reaction, which does not take into account the role of adsorption, so that when the adsorption process becomes the part affecting the photodegradation reaction, it is necessary to determine the actual reaction rate constant ( $k$ ) that has corrected the  $k_{obs}$  with the adsorption constant ( $K$ ), where  $k_{obs} = kKL$ .

Kinetics parameter  $k_{obs}$  was determined by plotting  $1/C_t$  vs  $t$  followed by the calculation based on the second-order reaction. The reaction rate constant ( $k$ ) is determined based on the  $k_{obs}$  and the results can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6 shows that for the Sn<sub>1-x</sub>Co<sub>x</sub>O<sub>2</sub> with x = 0 catalyst the magnitude of the reaction rates of MO photodegradation

Table 5: Kinetical data of MO photodegradation reaction order.

Sn <sub>1-x</sub> Co <sub>x</sub> O <sub>2</sub> , x =	Reaction Order	UV light		Visible light	
		k	R <sup>2</sup>	k	R <sup>2</sup>
0	0	0.00683	0.57239	0.01075	0.83697
	1	0.00481	0.63375	0.00927	0.93244
	2	0.00366	0.70187	0.00913	0.95211
0.0025	0	0.00655	0.52151	0.01504	0.85657
	1	0.00466	0.57094	0.01750	0.96809
	2	0.00366	0.63328	0.02735	0.99514
0.005	0	0.00786	0.62716	0.01307	0.81567
	1	0.00607	0.72654	0.01687	0.96418
	2	0.00518	0.83113	0.03153	0.98390

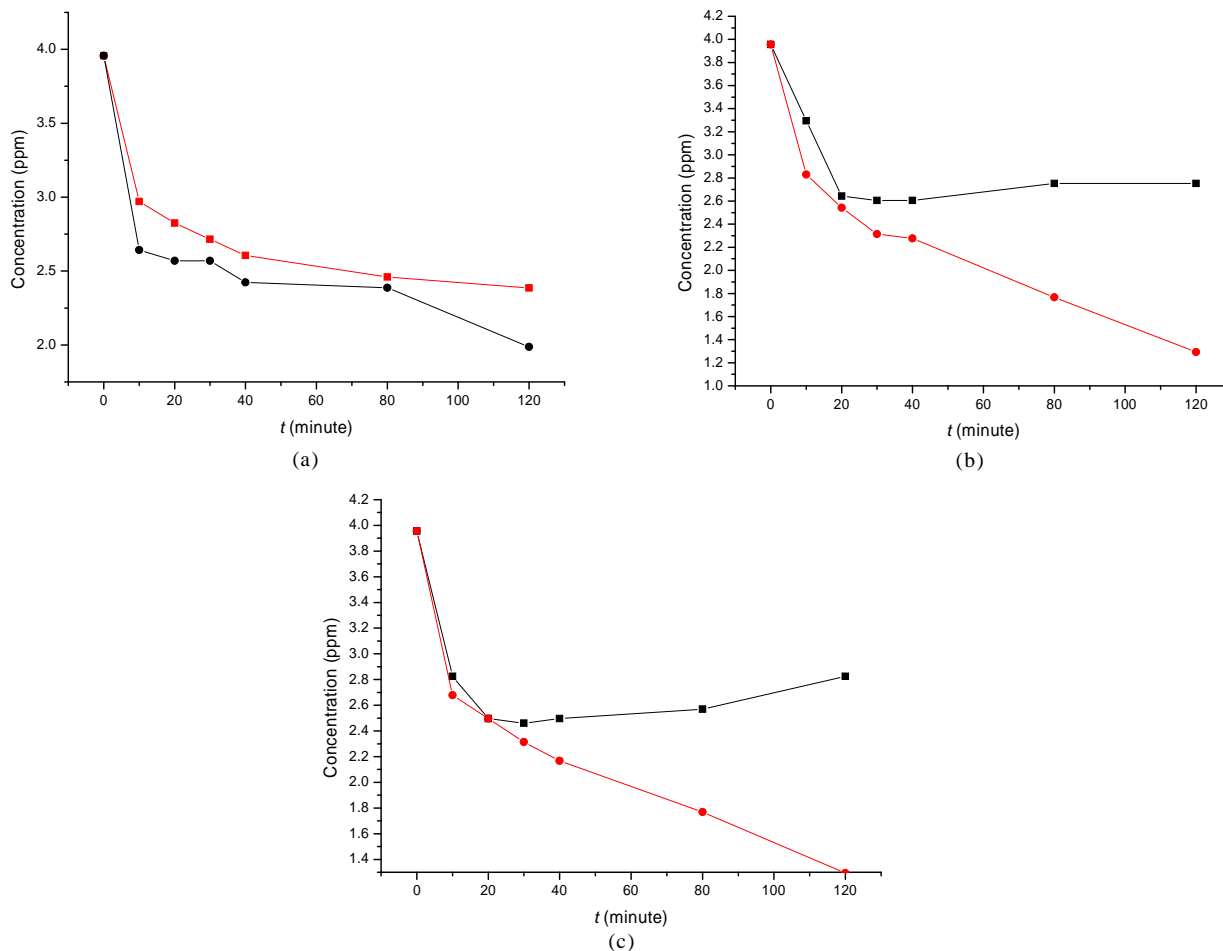


Fig. 3: The plot of the time of irradiation vs. MO concentration after the degradation under UV light (black line) and visible light (red line) using the catalysts of  $\text{Sn}_{1-x}\text{Co}_x\text{O}_2$  with  $x = 0$  (a), 0.0025 (b) and 0.005 (c).

Table 6: MO photodegradation kinetics with  $\text{Sn}_{1-x}\text{Co}_x\text{O}_2$  catalysts under UV and visible light.

Light source	$\text{Sn}_{1-x}\text{Co}_x\text{O}_2$ , $x =$	$k_{obs}$ (minute <sup>-1</sup> )	$k$ (minute <sup>-1</sup> )
UV	0	0.00366	0.004738
	0.0025	0.00366	0.006078
	0.005	0.00518	0.015638
Visible	0	0.00913	0.011818
	0.0025	0.02735	0.034169
	0.005	0.01687	0.050930

Table 7: Reaction rate of MO photodegradation using  $\text{Sn}_{1-x}\text{Co}_x\text{O}_2$  under UV and visible lights.

$\text{Sn}_{1-x}\text{Co}_x\text{O}_2$ , $x =$	Reaction rate (ppm <sup>2</sup> .minute <sup>-1</sup> )	
	UV light	Visible light
0	$7.4157 \cdot 10^{-2}$	$1.8497 \cdot 10^{-1}$
0.0025	$9.5130 \cdot 10^{-2}$	$5.3480 \cdot 10^{-1}$
0.005	$24.4758 \cdot 10^{-2}$	$7.9713 \cdot 10^{-1}$

under UV and visible light are relatively similar. However, for  $\text{Sn}_{1-x}\text{Co}_x\text{O}_2$  with  $x = 0.0025$  and 0.005 catalysts the reaction rates are significantly different. The photodegradation rate constant in visible light has a greater value than that of UV light. This means that the  $\text{Sn}_{1-x}\text{Co}_x\text{O}_2$  catalysis is effectively working under visible light. The rate of reaction is determined using equation as follows:

$$r = kC^n \quad \dots(9)$$

Where,  $r$  is the photodegradation reaction rate,  $k$  is the photodegradation rate constant,  $C$  is the initial concentration of MO, and  $n$  is the photodegradation reaction order. The reaction rate of MO photodegradation is listed in Table 7. The reaction rate of MO degradation under visible light is almost three time faster than that of under UV light.

## CONCLUSIONS

The  $\text{Sn}_{1-x}\text{Co}_x\text{O}_2$  photocatalysts have been prepared by impregnation method. The cobalt may be recognized by means of the larger lattice parameters of the  $\text{Sn}_{1-x}\text{Co}_x\text{O}_2$  with the increase of cobalt. Optical absorption studies clearly indicate the visible light response with the existence of cobalt. A higher photocatalytic activity for the decomposition of MO in the visible region has been confirmed for the prepared  $\text{Sn}_{1-x}\text{Co}_x\text{O}_2$  sample compared to the pure  $\text{SnO}_2$ .

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