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A Review on Novel Methods: Recent Developments in solid Dispersion Technologies.

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ABSTRACT:

The Biopharmaceutics Classification System (BCS) classifies drugs based on solubility and permeability, with BCS Class II and IV drugs exhibiting poor aqueous solubility, leading to suboptimal bioavailability. Solid dispersion (SD) technology is a widely studied approach to enhance the solubility, dissolution rate, and stability of such drugs by dispersing hydrophobic drug molecules within a hydrophilic carrier matrix. Various formulation techniques, including fusion, hot-melt extrusion, solvent evaporation, spray drying, and emerging methods such as supercritical fluid processing and electrospinning, have been developed to optimize SD systems. These methodologies improve drug dissolution kinetics, stability, and controlled release profiles. However, challenges such as crystallization tendencies, moisture sensitivity, and scalability remain significant. Advances in SD technology continue to play a pivotal role in enhancing the therapeutic efficacy and bioavailability of poorly water-soluble pharmaceuticals, thereby addressing critical formulation challenges in drug development.

Introduction:

The Biopharmaceutical Bracket System (BCS) categorizes medicines into four classes grounded on their solubility and permeability. Poor solubility, particularly in BCS Classes II and IV, poses a significant limitation to oral medicine administration, as it impacts dissolution and bioavailability. Colourful ways, including solid dissipation, flyspeck size reduction, swab conformation, pH revision, polymorphism, complexation, and the use of surfactants, have been developed to enhance solubility, with solid dispersion being one of the most effective and straightforward approaches [1]. The oral route remains the most favoured system of medicine administration due to its convenience, patient compliance, and expression inflexibility. still, it presents challenges, particularly in the immersion of inadequately water-answerable medicines within the gastrointestinal tract, leading to low bioavailability and lowered remedial efficacity. utmost new chemical realities in development are designed as solid lozenge forms due to their superior stability, accurate dosing, reduced bulk, and ease of manufacture, icing dependable and reproducible tube medicine attention following oral administration. numerous new chemical realities are inadequately water-answerable and largely lipophilic, leading to low oral bioavailability, high variability, and lack of cure proportionality. To address this, strategies like pro-drug conformation, beta-CD complexation, surfactants, micronization, and swab conformation have been used. Among these, solid dispersion (SD) technology has proven largely effective in enhancing solubility and dissolution [2]. Solid dispersion refers to solid products with a hydrophobic medicine and a hydrophilic carrier (crystalline or unformed). Upon exposure to water, the carrier dissolves, releasing the medicine as fine colloidal patches, enhancing solubility

Hydrophobic Drug + Hydrophilic Carrier

Solid Dispersion

Solubility: It can be defined in two ways

1. Quantitatively The attention of a solute in an impregnated result at a specific temperature.
2. Qualitatively The robotic mixing of substances to form a homogeneous result.

Table 1: Definitions of Solubility

Definition	Parts of solvent required for one part of solute
Very soluble	Less than 1
Freely soluble	From 1 -10
Soluble	From 10 -30
Sparingly soluble	From30-100
Slightly soluble	Form 100-1000
Very slightly soluble	From1000 -10,000
Insoluble	Greater than 10,000

Solubilization Process:

1. Bond Breaking: Interionic or intermolecular bonds in the solute and solvent molecules are broken to create space for solute integration.
2. Molecule Release: Solute molecules separate from the bulk.
3. Integration: Solute molecules integrate into the solvent

The FDA's Biopharmaceutics Classification System (BCS) classifies drugs into four categories. Solubility issues are significant in Class II and IV, where low solubility makes dissolution the rate-limiting step for drug absorption. The BCS classification system is described in Table No.2

Table 2: The Biopharmaceutics Classification System for Drugs

Class	Solubility	Permeability	Absorption Pattern	Rate limiting step in the absorption
I	High	High	Well, absorbed	Gastric emptying
II	Low	High	Variable	Dissolution
III	High	Low	Variable	Permeability
IV	Low	Low	Poorly absorbed	Case by case

SOLID DISPERSION: Solid dispersion is the pharmaceutical technique used to improve the solubility, dissolution rate and stability of poorly soluble drugs. SD refers to the group of solid products consisting of at least two different components.

i.e., Hydrophilic matrix & Hydrophobic drug

Solid dispersion systems are defined as "the solid-state dispersion of one or more active substances in an inert carrier or matrix generated by the melting-solvent process, solvent evaporation, or fusion." The medicine is hydrophobic, while the matrix is hydrophilic [1]. Amorphous precipitation in a crystalline carrier, compound, or complex forms are examples of solid dispersion types, as are simple eutectic mixes, solid solutions, glass solutions, and glass suspensions. A family of solid products known as "solid dispersions" typically consist of a hydrophilic matrix and a hydrophobic drug, or at least two distinct components. Both crystalline and amorphous forms of the matrix are possible. Crystalline particles, amorphous clusters, or molecules can all be used to distribute the drug. (3)

Advantage of Solid Dispersion: Improving the bioavailability of drugs by enhancing their water solubility can be achieved through chemical or formulation approaches. Chemical modifications include salt formation or the addition of polar or ionizable groups, leading to pro-drug formation. However, solid dispersions are a more efficient and practical method for enhancing drug solubility. These dispersions involve dispersing poorly soluble drugs in highly soluble carriers, increasing surface area and dissolution rate. Additionally, the use of hydrophilic carriers, surfactants, and super disintegrants can further enhance drug release and bioavailability. This technique is particularly useful for preparing rapidly disintegrating tablets, allowing patients to take medication easily without water, offering an alternative to injections. [4]

Disadvantages of Solid Dispersion: Solid dispersions, despite their advantages, are not widely used in commercial pharmaceuticals due to the risk of converting the amorphous state into a crystalline form during processing or storage. Factors like mechanical stress, temperature, and humidity can accelerate this transformation, reducing solubility and dissolution rates. Moisture absorption by polymers in solid dispersions can lead to phase separation, crystal growth, or structural changes, affecting drug stability. To maximize the benefits of amorphous solids, stabilization is crucial both in storage and during in vivo performance. Additionally, manufacturing solid dispersions on a large scale remains a challenge, requiring specialized strategies for industrial production.

Classification of Solid dispersion:

A. On the basis of the carrier used

1. First-generation solid dispersion: In this type, the drug is incorporated into crystalline carriers like urea and sugars, forming a thermodynamically stable crystalline dispersion that releases slowly. Eutectic mixtures, with a lower melting point than the drug and carrier, are preferred as they crystallize instantly during cooling, unlike monotectic mixtures. Reduced particle size enhances surface area, dissolution rate, and bioavailability [1,2].

2. Second generation solid dispersion: In second generation solid dispersion Amorphous carriers like Polyvinyl Pyrrolidone (PVP) and Polyethylene Glycol (PEG) are preferred over the first generation for their thermodynamic stability. These carriers can be synthetic or natural polymers and are classified into amorphous solid suspensions or solutions. In solid suspensions, the drug and carrier exist in two phases, while in solid solutions, they are molecularly dispersed into one homogeneous phase. More viscous polymers help prevent drug recrystallization and improve stability, although they may reduce dissolution rates [3].

3. Third generation solid dispersion: In Third generation solid dispersion Surfactants like Gelucire 44/14 and Solutol HS 15 enhance drug dissolution by preventing agglomeration and nucleation, improving solubility and stability. Polymers with low glass transition temperatures (e.g., Poloxamer) inhibit recrystallization, maintaining the drug's amorphous state and boosting its physical and chemical stability. These excipients help improve bioavailability and formulation stability, especially for poorly soluble drugs.

4. Fourth-generation solid dispersion: In fourth generation solid dispersion Controlled Release Solid Dispersions (CRSD) use carriers like Hydroxypropyl Cellulose (HPC) and Eudragit RS to enhance the solubility and extend the release of drugs with short half-lives. The main goals of CRSD are to improve solubility and provide sustained, controlled drug release over time [2].

B. On the basis of their molecular arrangements:

1. **Eutectics Systems:** This mixture composes of two compounds in the liquid state that are completely miscible but in the solid state only to a very limited extent [4]. It is prepared through fast solidification of the fused melt of the two compounds, giving a complete liquid miscible product and very little solid-solid solubility. Such a system is thermodynamically intimately mixed with the physical mixture of its two crystalline compounds.
2. **Glass Solution and Suspension:** Glass solution refers to the homogeneous glassy system in which a solute is dissolved in a glass carrier, whereas the glass suspensions, in which the precipitated particles are present, are suspended in glass solvent. & Lattice energy in such systems is low, and the melting point is not sharp, examples of carriers that form glass solutions and suspensions are urea, citric acid, polyethene glycol, polyvinyl pyrrolidine, and sugars such as dextrose, sucrose, and galactose [2].
3. **Solid Solution:** In this system, when the two components crystallize together, they form a single homogeneous phase system. &e drug particle size is decreased to its molecular size in the solid solution. As a result, a faster rate of dissolution will be achieved in the solid solution than in the corresponding eutectic mixture. the solution can be categorized (as continuous or discontinuous) depending on the level of miscibility of the two compounds or how the solvate molecules are circulated (substitutional, interstitial, or amorphous) [3,4].
4.

Mechanism responsible for solubility enhancement from solid dispersion: Solid dispersion enhances drug solubility and bioavailability through various mechanisms. These include dissolution, using amorphous forms for faster dissolution and leveraging polymer relaxation and drug polymer interaction to enhance diffusion and stability. Additionally, diffusion through loosened polymers and polymers erosion controls drug release rates [2.3].

Limitations: Amorphous drugs are rarely used commercially due to their tendency to crystallize during processing and storage under temperature and humidity stress [3]. Moisture can increase drug mobility, promoting crystallization and reducing stability and effectiveness. Hygroscopic polymers in solid dispersions can cause phase separation, crystal growth, or conversion between amorphous and crystalline states, affecting solubility and dissolution rates. Stabilizing amorphous solids is crucial but faces challenges like poor manufacturing scalability, high costs, variability in properties, and difficulties in formulation and ensuring stability during scale-up.

Pharmaceutical Applications: Solid dispersion is a widely used technique in pharmaceutics to enhance the solubility, dissolution rate, and bioavailability of poorly water-soluble drugs. It involves dispersing the drug in an inert carrier or matrix at a solid state, which improves its wettability and reduces particle size, leading to enhanced drug release. Various carriers such as polymers (e.g., PVP, HPMC), sugars, and surfactants are used to stabilize the drug in an amorphous or molecularly dispersed state. Pharmaceutical applications of solid dispersion include improving oral drug absorption, achieving rapid or controlled drug release, and enhancing stability against environmental factors like moisture and temperature. It is particularly beneficial for drugs belonging to the BCS Class II and IV, where solubility is a limiting factor for absorption. Additionally, solid dispersion can help reduce food effects on drug absorption and minimize interpatient variability. Techniques such as solvent evaporation, melting (fusion) method, and spray drying are commonly used to prepare solid dispersions, making them an effective approach in formulation development for enhancing drug performance [23,24].

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Methods of preparation for solid dispersion:

1. **Fusion method:** The fusion method, proposed by Sekiguchi and Obi in 1961, involves heating a drug-polymer mixture to form a molten mass, followed by cooling, hardening, and pulverization to achieve the desired particle size. While popular for solid dispersions, this method has limitations, such as drug-polymer incompatibility at high temperatures and the need for thermal stability of both components. Surfactants can address miscibility issues, and lower production temperatures are preferable. Additionally, the fused mixture must resist recrystallization and phase separation [2].

2. **Hot-melt extrusion** (HME**) method:** It is a modern adaptation of the traditional fusion method, utilizing an extruder for intense mixing of components [3]. Unlike the fusion method, HME enables the shaping of molten drug-polymer mixtures into various forms such as implants, pellets, or oral dosage forms. However, it requires complete miscibility of the drug and polymer in the molten state, which can be predicted and optimized using solubility parameter phase diagrams [4]. Hot-melt extrusion (HME) has become a key technique for enhancing drug delivery, improving bioavailability, and enabling sustained release. Paracetamol tablets, formulated with low molecular weight polyethylene glycol (PEG) using HME, showed over 80% drug release within 30 minutes, meeting USP 30 standards. This method enhances the drug release profile compared to traditional formulations.

   Advantages of Hot melt extrusion method: Hot-melt extrusion is a simple, continuous, and efficient process with fewer steps, as it eliminates compression and drying. The high shear rate and temperature during mixing ensure uniform dispersion of fine drug particles within the polymer matrix at a molecular level. Unlike the traditional fusion method, this technique supports continuous manufacturing, making it suitable for large-scale production. Commonly used polymers include HPMC, HPMCAS, PVP, vinyl acetate, and polyethylene oxide [2].

3. **Coprecipitation Method (Coevaporate):** The coprecipitation method (coevaporation) involves dissolving a carrier in water and a medication in an organic solvent [4]. The aqueous carrier solution is then added to the organic drug solution after complete dissolution. The solvents are subsequently evaporated, and the resulting dispersion is crushed, sieved, and dried using a pestle and mortar. An example of a medication enhanced by this process is ibuprofen, where the solubility and dissolution rate are improved by two-fold and one-fold, respectively.

4. **Solvent evaporation method:** The solvent evaporation method involves dissolving both the drug and polymer in a single solvent, then removing the solvent to form a solid dispersion [4]. This method allows for molecular-level mixing, enhancing solubility and stability while avoiding thermal degradation of the drug and polymer [1]. However, challenges arise in achieving solubility, especially when the drug and polymer have large polarity differences, and surfactants are often needed, which can reduce drug loading capacity [5,6]. Additionally, the process is costly due to solvent evaporation, and phase separation may occur during drying [7]. A study on furosemide showed that solvent evaporation provided the best solubility enhancement compared to kneading, physical mixtures, and coprecipitation. Evaporation method gives the best results. However, the following order was observed; solvent evaporation> kneading > physical mixtures > coprecipitation.

5. **Spray Drying:** Spray drying is a key method for creating solid drug dispersions, turning liquids or suspensions into dry powders in a single step. It offers precise control over particle size, shape, density, and crystalline forms. The rapid solvent evaporation in spray drying increases viscosity, trapping drug molecules in a polymer matrix [1]. This method is especially useful for drugs with limited water solubility, improving their dissolution rate. However, the resulting solid particles may be amorphous, crystalline, or imperfect, depending on the drug's chemical properties. Studies have shown that the stability of amorphous forms is influenced by process variables [4]. Spray drying is cost-effective, scalable, and efficient for continuous batch production, making it a popular choice in pharmaceutical manufacturing [2].

6. **Supercritical Fluid (SCF) Method:** Supercritical fluids, particularly supercritical CO2, exhibit both liquid-like solvent properties and gas-like characteristics, such as low viscosity and high diffusivity. This makes them ideal for drug/polymer solubilization and improving mass transport in processes like Rapid Expansion of Supercritical Solutions (RESS) [9]. In RESS, supercritical CO2 dissolves drugs or polymers, which are then rapidly expanded into a low-pressure zone, resulting in smaller drug particle sizes. This environmentally friendly process avoids organic solvents, with minimal CO2 residuals posing no risk to patients. However, CO2's limited solubility for many drugs can hinder its effectiveness, leading to the development of alternative supercritical fluid processes to enhance drug solubility and particle formation. Response surface methodology was utilized for the optimization of the outcomes, and it was shown that the smallest particle size may be achieved at a temperature of 50°C, a pressure of 17.7 MPa, and a spray distance of 10 cm [3].

7. **Kneading Method**: The kneading method involves adding a solvent dropwise to a mixture of medication and carriers, followed by triturating in a pestle and mortar [10]. This process forms a slurry, reduces particle size, and enhances bioavailability [4]. Studies have shown that kneading improves the solubility of various drug complexes, including Satranidazole-cyclodextrin, OlmesartanV medoxomil, and Etoricoxib-cyclodextrin [7]. This technique has also been

used to improve the dissolution rate of Efavirenz, Nimesulide, and Azithromycin, with the kneading method often outperforming other methods like solvent evaporation in terms of solubility enhancement [1,2].

8. **Electrospinning Method:** Electrospinning is a novel technique used to prepare solid dispersions for enhancing the solubility and bioavailability of poorly water-soluble drugs. It involves the application of a high-voltage electric field to a polymer solution or melt, leading to the formation of fine fibers [3]. These fibers create an amorphous or nanocrystalline solid dispersion that improves drug dissolution rates [2]. In the electrospinning method for solid dispersion, a drug is first dissolved or dispersed in a polymer solution using a suitable solvent. This homogeneous solution is then loaded into a syringe equipped with a metallic needle. A high voltage (typically 10–30 kV) is applied, creating an electrostatic force that overcomes surface tension and forms a fine jet of polymer-drug solution [4]. As the solvent evaporates, nanofibers are formed and collected on a grounded collector plate. The resulting nanofibers contain the drug in an amorphous or nanocrystalline form, enhancing its solubility and dissolution rate. Finally, the fibers are dried and characterized using techniques like XRD, DSC, and FTIR to confirm drug dispersion and stability [1].

9. **Lyophilization Techniques/Freeze-Drying:** Lyophilization, also known as freeze-drying, is a widely used technique in pharmaceutical sciences to enhance the solubility and bioavailability of poorly water-soluble drugs [3,11]. In solid dispersion systems, lyophilization helps in maintaining the amorphous form of drugs and preventing recrystallization, thereby improving dissolution rates [4]. In the lyophilization process for solid dispersion, the drug and hydrophilic carrier (e.g., PVP, HPMC, or PEG) are dissolved or dispersed in a suitable solvent, typically water or an organic solvent. The solution is then rapidly frozen at ultra-low temperatures (-40°C or lower) to solidify the drug-carrier matrix. This is followed by primary drying (sublimation) under vacuum, where ice is directly converted into vapor without passing through the liquid phase. In secondary drying, residual water is removed at a slightly higher temperature to ensure stability. The resulting porous and amorphous solid dispersion enhances drug solubility and dissolution [1].

10. **Ball Milling:** The ball milling process works on the principle of impact and attrition. When the milling chamber rotates, the balls collide with the drug and carrier particles, reducing their size and forming a uniform dispersion [12]. The procedure for preparing solid dispersions using the ball milling method begins with accurately weighing and mixing the poorly soluble drug with a suitable hydrophilic carrier, such as PVP or HPMC. The mixture is then placed into a ball mill along with stainless steel or ceramic balls. The milling chamber rotates at an optimized speed (typically 200–500 rpm) for a specific duration (ranging from a few hours to 24 hours), allowing the balls to collide with the drug and carrier particles, reducing their size and promoting uniform dispersion. After milling, the processed material is collected and analyzed for particle size, crystallinity, and solubility enhancement. The final solid dispersion can then be incorporated into formulations like tablets or capsules to improve drug dissolution and bioavailability [13].

11. **Solvent Free Film Casting:** The solvent-free film casting method is a novel approach used in solid dispersion technology to enhance the solubility and bioavailability of poorly water-soluble drugs. This method eliminates the need for organic solvents, making it eco-friendly and reducing toxicity concerns. In this process, the drug and a suitable polymer (such as HPMC, PVP, or PEG) are melted together at a controlled temperature and mixed thoroughly to achieve a uniform dispersion. The molten mixture is then spread onto a suitable surface using a casting blade or applicator and allowed to cool and solidify. Once the film is formed, it is carefully peeled off and cut into desired sizes for further evaluation or use. This method is simple, cost-effective, and widely applied in developing or dispersible films, transdermal patches, and mucoadhesive drug delivery systems [14].

12. **In Situ Formation:** The in-situ formation method is a technique used in the preparation of solid dispersions, where the drug and polymer (carrier) are dissolved in a common solvent and solidified within the dosage form itself. This approach enhances the solubility and bioavailability of poorly water-soluble drugs by dispersing them at the molecular level [15]. The process involves dissolving the drug and carrier in a volatile solvent, which is then introduced into a dosage form or onto an inert substrate. As the solvent evaporates, the solid dispersion forms in situ, eliminating the need for additional processing steps like milling or drying. This method is particularly beneficial for controlled drug release formulations and simplifies the manufacturing process by allowing dispersion formation directly within the final product [16].

13. **Melt Agglomeration Process:** Melt agglomeration is a technique used in solid dispersion to enhance the solubility and bioavailability of poorly water-soluble drugs [1]. This method involves agglomerating drug particles with a binder, which is melted to facilitate agglomeration and dispersion. It is commonly employed in pharmaceutical formulations to achieve uniform drug distribution and controlled drug release [17]. In this process, the drug, carrier (such as polyethylene glycol, Gelucire, or poloxamers), and excipients are mixed and heated above the melting point of the binder. The molten binder acts as a bridge, leading to particle agglomeration. The mixture is then cooled and solidified to form spherical agglomerates. This can be carried out using high-shear mixers, rotary processors, or fluidized beds. The resulting agglomerates improve wettability, dissolution rate, and uniformity of drug dispersion, making it a promising technique for enhancing drug solubility [18].

14. **Melting Solvent Method (Melt Evaporation):** The melting solvent method is a modified fusion technique used in solid dispersion preparation, particularly for thermolabile drugs [17]. In this method, the drug is first dissolved in a small amount of an organic solvent, which is then incorporated into the molten carrier. The mixture is stirred to ensure uniform distribution, and upon cooling, the solvent evaporates, leading to the formation of a solid dispersion. This technique enhances drug solubility and dissolution while minimizing thermal degradation risks [3].

Recent Developments in Solid Dispersion Technologies: The pharmaceutical industry faces a major challenge in formulating poorly water-soluble drugs, as their low solubility and dissolution rates significantly impact bioavailability and therapeutic effectiveness. Solid dispersion technology has emerged as a promising approach to enhance drug solubility by dispersing an active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) into a carrier matrix, leading to improved dissolution and absorption.

1. **Direct Capsule Filling:** Direct capsule filling is a novel method where molten drug-carrier mixtures are filled into hard gelatin capsules, allowing solidification upon cooling. The Direct Capsule Filling Method involves filling semisolid drug dispersions into hard gelatin capsules as melts, which solidify at room temperature [19]. This technique, first developed in 1978, is useful for preparing PEG-based solid dispersions. However, while PEG (Polyethylene Glycol) has been explored as a carrier, it may not be ideal due to its rapid dissolution, leading to drug-rich surface layers that hinder drug release. The method minimizes contamination, improves fill weight uniformity, and prevents crystallinity changes. To enhance drug dissolution, surfactants like polysorbate-80 or phosphatidylcholine must be added. The molten solution's temperature should not exceed 70°C to avoid damaging the gelatin capsule [20].

Advantages:

a) Prevents drug degradation due to high processing temperatures.
b) Reduces processing steps and cross-contamination.
c) Suitable for thermolabile drugs.

Challenges:

a) Requires precise control of viscosity and drug loading.
b) Risk of drug crystallization upon cooling.

2. **Electrostatic Spinning (Electrospinning):** Electrospinning is a promising technique used for preparing nanofibrous solid dispersions. It involves applying a high-voltage electric field to a polymer-drug solution, creating ultrafine fibers with a high surface area [4]. This technique used to produce solid fibres from a polymer solution or melt using a strong electrostatic field. The process involves a charged polymer jet being ejected from a Taylor cone and carried to a collection screen, where the fibers are formed. The technique is useful for pharmaceutical applications, such as fabricating nanofibers for drug delivery. Water-soluble and insoluble polymers can be used to control drug release. An example is Itraconazole/HPMC nanofibers, which enhance drug dissolution. Electrospinning is a cost-effective and scalable method with significant potential in biomedicine and pharmaceutical industries for solid dispersion formulations [20].

Advantages:

a) Enhances the dissolution rate due to the high surface-to-volume ratio.
b) Reduces the need for large amounts of carrier material.
c) Allows for continuous manufacturing.

Challenges:

a) Limited choice of polymeric carriers.
b) Requires specialized equipment.

3 Supercritical Fluid Technology: Supercritical fluid (SCF) technology utilizes supercritical CO_2 to produce solid dispersions with uniform particle size and improved drug solubility [17]. The API is dissolved in SCF and precipitated rapidly upon depressurization. supercritical fluid (SCF) technology is a novel approach for preparing solvent-free solid dispersions, overcoming the limitations of traditional methods that rely on mechanical forces and excess organic solvents [19]. In one example, a solid dispersion of carbamazepine in PEG-4000 was prepared using supercritical CO_2, which enhanced its dissolution rate. SCFs have unique properties, such as liquid-like density and gas-like viscosity, which can be adjusted by changing temperature and pressure [4]. CO_2 is widely used due to its safety and efficiency. SCF techniques allow for controlled drug impregnation, improved particle formation, and minimal residual solvents, making them suitable for pharmaceutical applications. While methods like Rapid Expansion of Supercritical Solution (RESS) have limitations due to low drug solubility in CO_2, SCF technology is cost-effective and scalable for industrial production [20].

Advantages:

a) Avoids the use of harmful organic solvents.
b) Produces nanoparticles with high surface area.
c) Enables precise control over particle morphology.

Challenges:

a) High operational costs.
b) Requires specialized SCF equipment [18].

5. **Dropping Method:** In this method, a drug-polymer solution is dropped onto a solid substrate or liquid bath, leading to rapid solvent evaporation and solid dispersion formation [4]. The dropping method is a novel approach for producing round particles from melted solid dispersions, aiding in the crystallization of various chemicals. It involves pipetting a melted drug-carrier mixture and dropping it onto a plate, where it solidifies into spherical particles [18]. Factors like viscosity and pipette size influence particle shape, requiring precise temperature control. Industrial production has been developed by Rotoform (Sandvik Process System Co, Sweden). A major advantage is the elimination of organic solvents, avoiding solvent evaporation issues. Additionally, it prevents pulverization, sifting, and compressibility problems seen in other melt methods. However, the method is limited to thermostable drugs, and ensuring the physical stability of solid dispersions remains a challenge. Despite these limitations, the dropping method holds promise for improving solid dispersion formulations with further refinement in size distribution, uniformity, and stability [19,20].

Advantages:

a) Simple and cost-effective.
b) Avoids exposure to high temperatures.
c) Suitable for heat-sensitive drugs.

Challenges:

a) Limited scalability for large-scale production.
b) May result in uneven drug distribution

Characterization of Solid Dispersion: Characterization of solid dispersions is important for understanding their physical and chemical properties, which influence drug solubility, dissolution rate, and stability. Various analytical techniques are employed for this purpose. Thermal analysis methods such as Differential Scanning Calorimetry (DSC) and Thermogravimetric Analysis (TGA) help determine melting points, phase transitions, and thermal stability. X-ray Diffraction (XRD) is used to assess the crystallinity of the drug, distinguishing between amorphous and crystalline states [21]. Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR) provides insights into molecular interactions between the drug and the carrier, indicating possible hydrogen bonding or chemical modifications. Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM) and Atomic Force Microscopy (AFM) reveal surface morphology and particle size distribution. Additionally, dissolution studies evaluate the improvement in drug release compared to pure drugs or physical mixtures. These characterization techniques collectively help

optimize solid dispersion formulations to enhance bioavailability and therapeutic efficacy [4].

Evaluation of physicochemical properties of Solid Dispersion: The evaluation of solid dispersion involves various physicochemical assessments to determine its effectiveness in enhancing drug solubility and stability. These evaluations include:

1. Phase Solubility Study: This is conducted to analyse the interaction between the drug and the polymer. The drug is dissolved in different polymer concentrations, and the mixture is agitated at 37°C for 48 hours. The solution is then filtered and analysed using a UV spectrophotometer to determine the solubility of the drug.

2. Saturation Solubility Study: In this test, an excess amount of drug and solid dispersion is added to water until a supersaturated state is reached. The solution is stirred at 37°C for 48 hours, filtered, and analysed using a UV spectrophotometer [22].

3. Drug Content Analysis: The percentage of drug loading and entrapment efficiency are calculated by dissolving a known amount of solid dispersion in a suitable solvent and analysing it using a UV spectrophotometer [19].

Discussion:

Solid dispersion (SD) technology has gained significant attention in pharmaceutical research due to its ability to enhance the solubility and bioavailability of poorly water-soluble drugs. The effectiveness of SD depends on various factors, including the selection of an appropriate carrier, the preparation method, and the physical stability of the formulation. Hydrophilic carriers such as polymers (e.g., PVP, PEG, HPMC) play a crucial role in stabilizing amorphous drug forms and preventing recrystallization, thereby improving dissolution rates. Among the various techniques used for SD preparation, solvent evaporation, fusion, hot-melt extrusion, and spray drying are widely employed due to their efficiency and scalability. Newer techniques such as supercritical fluid processing and electrospinning offer advantages like controlled particle size and improved drug dispersion, but challenges such as high production costs and process complexities limit their widespread adoption. Additionally, amorphous SD formulations, while beneficial for solubility enhancement, are prone to physical instability, requiring careful selection of stabilizers and processing conditions. Despite these challenges, SD technology continues to evolve, with ongoing research focusing on optimizing formulation parameters and exploring novel excipients to enhance stability and drug release properties. Advances in computational modeling and in vitro-in vivo correlation studies are also contributing to better prediction and control of SD performance. With continued progress, SD remains a vital approach for addressing solubility-related challenges in drug formulation, ensuring improved therapeutic efficacy and patient outcomes.

Conclusion:

Solid dispersion (SD) technology is a highly effective approach for enhancing the solubility, dissolution rate, and bioavailability of poorly water-soluble drugs, particularly those in BCS Class II and IV. Various preparation techniques, including fusion, hot-melt extrusion, solvent evaporation, and spray drying, have been successfully employed to improve drug performance. Despite its advantages, SD faces challenges such as recrystallization, moisture sensitivity, and scalability issues, which need to be addressed for wider commercial application. Future advancements in polymer selection, process optimization, and novel formulation strategies will be crucial in overcoming these limitations. Overall, SD remains a vital tool in pharmaceutical development, significantly contributing to improved drug delivery and therapeutic efficacy.

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