**Harnessing Plant Growth-Promoting Rhizobacteria, *Bacillus subtilis* and *B. aryabhattai* to Combat Salt Stress in Rice: A Study on the Regulation of Antioxidant Defense, Ion Homeostasis, and Photosynthetic Parameters**

**Ayesha Siddika1, Alfi Anjum Rashid2, Shakila Nargis Khan2, Amena Khatun3, Muhammad Manjurul Karim2, PV Vara Prasad4\* and Mirza Hasanuzzaman1\***

1Department of Agronomy, Faculty of Agriculture, Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh

2Department of Microbiology, University of Dhaka, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh

3Department of Agriculture, Noakhali Science and Technology University, Noakhali-3814, Bangladesh

4Department of Agronomy, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS, United States

**\*Correspondence:**

vara@ksu.edu (P.V.V.P.); mhzsauag@yahoo.com (M.H.)

## Supplementary Figures



**Supplementary Figure 1.** Changes in the levels of indole-3-acetic acid (IAA) concentration of rice plants under salt stress(50 and 100 mM NaCl) with the absence or presence of three PGPRs (*Bacillus subtilis*, epiphytic *B. aryabhattai*, and endophytic *B. aryabhattai*). Data are presented as mean ± standard deviation of three replications (*n*=3). Distinct letters on the bars show significant differences between treatments at *p* ≤ 0.05 from Tukey’s HSD test.



**Supplementary Figure 2.** Variations in MG (A), Gly I (B), and Gly II (C) activities of rice plants under salt stress (50 and 100 mM NaCl) in the absence or presence of three PGPRs (*Bacillus subtilis*, epiphytic *B. aryabhattai*, and endophytic *B. aryabhattai*). Data are presented as mean ± standard deviation of three replications (*n*=3). Distinct letters on the bars show significant differences between treatments at *p* ≤ 0.05 from Tukey’s HSD test.