

STUDY ON HIGH CONCENTRATION FLY ASH SLURRY DISPOSAL THROUGH PIPELINE

by

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Submitted

in fulfillment of the requirements

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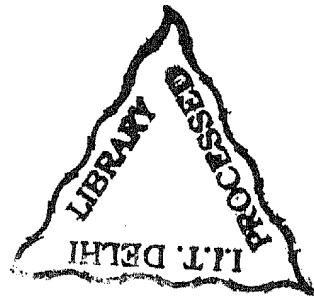
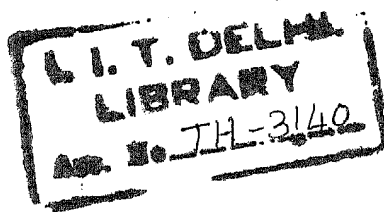
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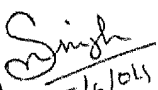
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled "STUDY ON HIGH CONCENTRATION FLY ASH SLURRY DISPOSAL THROUGH PIPELINE" being submitted by ABHAI KUMAR VERMA to the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (India) for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Mechanics is a record of bonafide research work carried out by him under our supervision and guidance. The thesis in our opinion has reached the requisite standard fulfilling the requirement of Doctor of Philosophy Degree.

The research report and the results presented in this thesis have not been submitted in part or in full to any other University or Institute for the award of any degree or diploma.

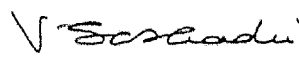
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To
My Wife
Rashmi
&
My Daughters
Eipsa and Eisha

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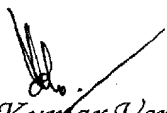
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Slurry pipelines are commonly used for transportation of particulate materials like mineral ores, coal, fly ash, tailings etc. For transportation of such materials in bulk quantities over considerable distances, these pipelines are commonly designed for operation at low to medium solid concentrations. Though the design procedure involves the use of pilot plant loop test data and semi empirical correlations developed over the years, it has to ensure operational reliability and flexibility. However, in recent years, the emphasis is more on energy efficiency and conservation of water, which is being used as carrier fluid. Thus, the recent trend is to increase the solid concentration to as high a level as possible.

Thermal power constitutes more than half of the world's electric power generation and millions of tonnes of coal are burnt in thermal power plants across the world. Large quantity of coal ash (Fly ash and Bottom ash) is thereby produced whose properties vary over a wide range from one plant to other. With such a high production rate of ash having hardly any commercial value, it is essential that the material be quickly, reliably and efficiently removed from the plant. The ever-increasing requirement of fly ash removal has caught the attention of the investigators and the slurry pipeline designers across the world, because transportation of coal ash from the plant to the ash ponds is generally done through pipelines in slurry form in the thermal power stations. The properties of coal ash vary from one plant to the other depending on the coal used. In India, the quality of coal used is of poor grade and as such it contains 35 to 45% of ash. Presently approximately 100 million tonnes of coal ash is produced in India out of which

about 80% is fly ash and the rest is bottom ash. The concentrations used for transportation lie between 10 to 20% by weight making the whole system highly uneconomical and energy intensive. The fly ash produced is very fine whereas bottom ash is coarse and many a times same pipe line is used for disposal of both materials. Hence the design requires a planned study to generate data, which will be useful for the pipeline designers.

The present day knowledge about hydraulic design of slurry pipelines is far from being complete which compels the designers to resort to the expensive, time consuming and material-specific pilot plant studies. Hence, the need arises to carry out extensive study to generate a basic data covering all aspects of slurry pipeline design to make it an optimum design methodology. Pressure drop besides having the complex dependence on the flow and geometrical parameters is also dependent on the different components used in the pipeline network. The in-depth review of the literature reveals that there is still a large gap in the knowledge for selection of optimised values of hydraulic parameters and hence the present study is aimed to generate some experimental data for the solid-liquid flow in horizontal straight pipelines and bends. Looking into the recent trend for the design of the slurry pipelines, the entire emphasis of the present work is given towards the slurry flow through pipelines especially at higher range of solid concentrations i.e. $C_w > 50\%$, by weight. Fly ash has been chosen as the material due to its relevance in Indian context.

The knowledge of slurry rheology is very much vital particularly in the dense phase slurry conveying system for the design of slurry pipeline. The rheological behaviour of the suspension depends on a large number of parameters and for fly ash slurry at any concentration has a marked dependence on particle size distribution. Five groups of fly ash samples having different particle size distribution are prepared by wet sieving to

simulate the fly ash collected from different fields of Electro-static Precipitator (ESP) hoppers. Six suspensions of different solid concentrations in the range of 40-70% (by weight) are prepared from each sample to study the effect of solid concentration on the rheological parameters. The study shows that the fly ash slurries above a solid concentration of 40% by weight are non-Newtonian and that the experimental data fits a simple Bingham plastic model. It further shows that the rheological parameters increase monotonically with the solid concentration and have higher values for finer particulate suspensions. These rheological parameters can be used to predict the pressure drop in pipelines based on some suitable rheological model of the slurry.

In order to carry out in-depth study on pressure drop characteristics for fly ash slurry flow through straight pipeline, basic data for pressure drop is generated in a 50 mm NB pilot plant test loop as a function of velocity at concentration ' C_w ' ranging in the higher concentration range from 50-65 % (by weight). The study is mainly oriented towards understanding the flow behaviour for multi-sized particulate fly ash slurries and an attempt has been made to correlate the effect of efflux concentration on pressure drop characteristics. This pressure drop data for non-Newtonian fly ash slurries at high concentrations have been compared with the results obtained from analytical approach which involves the choice of semi-empirical pressure drop correlations based on rheometric data in quantitative terms. The deviations in the results are within the reasonable limits ($\pm 20\%$). Hence the analytical approach can be adopted by the slurry pipeline designers instead of resorting to the extensive pilot plant tests, which is tedious, time consuming, uneconomical and complex in nature.

In the present study, the direct methods for slurry viscosity reduction by adding deflocculants, which disperse flocculated slurries and soap addition (wetting agent), at

concentrations in the range 0.1 to 0.4 % by total mixture weight have been studied. The slurry rheological parameters get modified and even in some cases the behavior of the slurry changes from non-Newtonian behavior to Newtonian behavior. The analysis of data has shown that at any selected velocity there is a substantial decrease in the pressure drop, the average reduction being around 30%. This highlights a net saving of approximately one-third of the total energy consumption.

In order to carry out the study on ageing effect, fly ash slurry was allowed to flow for 10 hours of run continuously, and observation showed that practically there was no attrition of particles. So the fly ash slurries are found to be free from the ageing effect.

Pipe bends are an integral part of any pipeline system and they involve additional losses. The study is carried out for the effect of bend in the slurry pipeline in terms of relative pressure drop, bend loss coefficient, and permanent pressure loss coefficient for the flow of fly ash slurries at higher concentration range (50-65%, by weight). The results show that the effect of pipe bend on its down-stream side does not persist for a long distance and fully developed flow is achieved much earlier, as compared to the slurry flow at low concentrations. This phenomena even reduces the overall pressure losses.

Thickened tailing disposal system through slurry pipelines has also been investigated for tailing material from a Uranium ore processing plant in India in terms of rheological properties and pressure drop characteristics at higher concentrations range and the utility of the single pipeline for transporting both pre and post hydro-cyclone materials has been established.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page No.
Certificate	i
Acknowledgement	iii
Abstract	v
Table of Contents	ix
List of Figures	xv
List of Tables	xix
List of Photographs	xxi
Nomenclature	xxiii

CHAPTER 1	INTRODUCTION	1-7
1.1.	Transportation of Fly Ash at High Concentrations through Slurry Pipeline	3
1.2.	Relevance of High Concentrations Fly Ash Slurry Disposal System	4
1.3.	Motivation for the present study	6
CHAPTER 2	LITERATURE SURVEY	9-42
2.1.	Characteristics for Solid-Liquid Flow through Straight Pipelines	9
2.1.1	Pressure Drop Studies in Solid-Liquid Flow through pipeline	10
2.1.2	Pipeline Studies on Higher Concentrations	15
2.2.	Studies on Fly Ash Transportation through Slurry Pipelines	20
2.3	Rheology of Solid-Liquid Suspensions	24
2.3.1	Studies on Newtonian and non-Newtonian Slurry Rheology	24

2.3.2	Studies on Rheological Model Based Pressure Gradient Prediction	29
2.3.3	Effect of Additives on Rheological and Pressure Drop Characteristics	34
2.4	Studies on Flow through Pipe Bends	38
2.5	Scope of the present study	41

CHAPTER 3 EXPERIMENTAL SET-UP, INSTRUMENTATION AND BENCH SCALE TESTS

3.1	Pilot Plant Test Loop (50 mm NB)	46
3.2.	Instrumentation	47
3.2.1	Flow Rate Measurement	48
3.2.2	Pressure Drop Measurement	49
3.2.2.1	Straight Slurry Pipelines	49
3.2.2.2	Bends	49
3.3.	Bench Scale Tests	50
3.3.1	Particle Size Distribution	50
3.3.2	Specific Gravity of Solids	51
3.3.3	Static Settled Concentration	51
3.3.4	Rheological Behaviour of Solid-Liquid Mixture	52

CHAPTER 4 RHEOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF FLY ASH SLURRIES AT HIGH CONCENTRATIONS AND EFFECT OF ADDITIVES

	61-100
4.1. Physical Properties of Fly Ash	62
4.2. Details of Experimental Measurements	63
4.2.1. Experimental Procedure	63

4.2.2.	Range of Parameters	65
4.2.3	Uncertainty in Measurements	65
4.3.	Effects of Additives on Fly Ash Slurry Rheology	67
4.4	Analysis of Data	70
4.5	Results and Discussion	71
4.5.1	Effect of Solid Concentration on Slurry Rheology	72
4.5.2	Effect of Particle Size Distribution on Slurry Rheology	74
4.5.3	Effect of Additives on Fly Ash Slurry Rheology	75
4.6	Practical Relevance of the Present Study	78
4.7	Concluding Remarks	79
CHAPTER 5	PRESSURE DROP CHARACTERISTICS FOR THE FLOW OF FLY ASH SLURRIES THROUGH STRAIGHT HORIZONTAL PIPLINE	101-127
5.1	Physical Properties of Material Used	102
5.2.	Experimental Procedure, Range of Parameters and Uncertainties in Measurements	103
5.2.1.	Experimental Procedure	103
5.2.2.	Range of Parameters	104
5.2.3	Uncertainties in Measurements	104
5.2.4	Sources of Error	104
5.3.	Flow Models for Fanning Friction Factor Prediction	105
5.3.1.	Friction Factor Correlation	105
5.3.2.	Mathematical Formulation	106
5.3.3.	Computational Procedure	108

5.3.4	Prediction of Pressure Drop for the Flow of Fly Ash Slurry with Additives (Sodium hexametaphosphate)	111
5.4.	Study of Ageing of Fly Ash Slurry during Flow in Pipeline	112
5.5	Results and Discussion	113
5.5.1	Pressure Drop Characteristics	113
5.5.2	Prediction of Pressure Drop for Fly Ash Slurry Flow through Straight Horizontal Pipeline	115
5.5.3	Prediction of Pressure Drop for Fly Ash Slurry Flow through Straight Horizontal Pipeline with Additives	117
5.5.4	Effect of Ageing on Fly Ash Slurry	117
5.6	Practical Relevance of the Present Study	119
5.7	Concluding Remarks	119
 CHAPTER 6	 PRESSURE DROP FOR THE FLOW OF FLY ASH SLURRY AT HIGH CONCENTRATIONS THROUGH 90° HORIZONTAL PIPE BEND OF RADIUS RATION 5.6	 129-145
6.1.	Physical Properties of Fly Ash	130
6.2.	Geometry of Bends	130
6.3.	Experimental Procedure and Instrumentation	131
6.4.1	Range of Parameters	132
6.5.	Results and Discussion	132
6.5.1	Pressure Drop Characteristics of Bends	132
6.5.2	Relative Pressure Drop	133
6.5.3	Bend Loss Coefficient	134
6.5.4	Permanent Pressure Loss	136

6.5.5	Effect of Bend on Flow on Down-stream Pipe	138
6.6	Practical Relevance of the Present Study	140
6.7	Concluding Remarks	140
CHAPTER 7	STUDY ON THICKENED SLURRY DISPOSAL OF URANIUM TAILINGS	147-170
7.1.	Physical Properties of Uranium Tailings	148
7.2	Range of Parameters	149
7.2.1.	Rheological Measurements	149
7.2.2.	Measurements In Pilot Plant Test Loop	149
7.3	Results and Discussion	150
7.3.1	Rheological Characteristics of the Uranium Tailing Slurries	150
7.3.2	Pilot Plant Test Loop Data	150
7.3.2.1	Pressure Drop in 50 mm NB Pipe Loop	150
7.3.2.2	Relative Pressure Drop in 50 mm NB Pipe Loop	151
7.3.3	Effect of Attrition on Pilot Plant Loop Data	151
7.3.4	Prediction of Pressure Drop Using Rheological Model and Correlations	152
7.4.	Concluding remarks	152
CHAPTER 8	CONCLUDING REMARKS AND SCOPE FOR FUTURE STUDIES	171-175
8.1	Concluding Remarks	171
8.2	Scope for the future Studies	173
References		177-191
Brief Bio-Data of Author		193
Papers Published/ Communicated		195