

HYDRODYNAMICS OF FREE SETTLING AND
FLUIDISATION

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ABSTRACT

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A critical review of the experimental and theoretical investigations, describing flow around a spherical particle settling at its terminal velocity, reveals that the standard drag curve and the various analytical and numerical solutions of the Navier-Stokes equations are not in agreement because, not only the various solutions do not take into consideration the actual magnitude of viscous drag but also the drag coefficient, C_d , defined by Rayleigh (139), includes only the effect due to inertial drag. Even, Maxworthy's (149) method of non dimensionalising the total drag with respect to the Stokes' drag is in direct contradiction with his own conclusion regarding the Stokes' law being applicable at $Re = 0$. In order to incorporate the effect due to viscous drag, the drag coefficient, in the present work, is redefined as:

$$C_{dm} = \frac{D}{\mu \frac{dv}{dx} + \frac{1}{2} \int v^2 \frac{\pi d^2}{4}}$$

It is shown that the same experimental data, which has been used to represent the standard drag curve, can be used to graphically represent the relation between the modified drag

coefficient and the Reynolds number, in the form of a modified drag curve. Further, the modified drag coefficient helps in evaluating the respective magnitudes of viscous and inertial drag in the intermediate region. For example, it is shown that the two forces are equal when $Re = 2.546$. Furthermore, it is proposed that for the same particle-fluid system, the drag acting on a particle settling in a bounded medium cannot increase as compared to that in an unbounded medium due to the simple reason that the net gravitational force balancing the drag exerted on the particle is same in both the cases.

In the present study on fluidisation, it is shown that the average relative velocity of fluid with respect to particles cannot be equal to U/E , but equal to the free settling velocity, V_t , of solid particles. Based on Richardson - Zaki(197) equation, it is shown that U/E^n represents the average relative velocity of fluid with respect to particles and E^n is shown to represent the average area fraction of the bed through which fluid flows during fluidisation. Finally, a simple explanation of the physical phenomenon of the appearance of parvoids and bubbles in fluidised beds is proposed. It is shown that the minimum voidage of a freely suspended bed of particles is dependent upon solid and fluid densities in the following manner:

$$E_{mfs} = \frac{\rho_s}{\rho_s + \rho_f}$$

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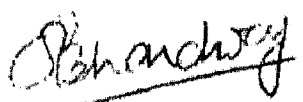
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(OM PRAKASH BHARDWAJ)

	<u>Page</u>
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgement	iv
List of Figures	xi
List of Tables	xii
Nomenclature	xiii
Chapter-1 Introduction	1
Chapter-2 Literature Review	25
2.0.0 Introduction	25
2A.0.0 Hydrodynamics of Single Spherical Particle Settling in Fluids	25
2A.1.0 Fluid of Infinite Extent	25
2A.1.1 Drag	25
2A.1.2 Drag Coefficient	29
2A.1.3 Shear and Form Drag Coefficients	30
2A.1.4 Standard Drag Coefficient Curve	32
2A.1.5 Terminal Velocity	32
2A.1.6 Analytical Methods	40
2A.1.7 Numerical Methods	43
2A.1.8 New Approach to the Drag Phenomenon	45
2A.2.0 Fluid of Finite extent	48

2A.2.1	Wall Effects	48
2B.0.0	Hydrodynamics of Fluidisation	52
2B.1.0	Introduction	52
2B.1.1	Pressure drop	52
2B.1.2	Minimum Fluidisation Velocity	53
2B.1.3	Minimum Voidage of Fluidisation	55
2B.1.4	Full Supporting Fluidisation Velocity	56
2B.2.0	State of Fluidisation	57
2B.3.0	Homogeneous Fluidisation	57
2B.3.1	Bed Expansion Characteristics	58
2B.3.2	Average Relative Velocity	62
2B.3.3	Drag Forces in Fluidised Beds	64
2B.4.0	Heterogeneous Fluidisation	77
2B.4.1	Cause of Bubbling	79
Chapter-3	Identification of Plausible Anomalies in the Hydrodynamics of Free Settling and Fluidisation	84
3.0.0	Introduction	84
3.1.0	Hydrodynamics of Single Spherical Particle Settling in Fluid of Infinite Extent	85
3.1.1	Drag Coefficient	85
3.2.0	Hydrodynamics of Fluidisation	91

3.2.1	Average Relative Velocity	91
3.2.2	Drag Force	94
3.3.0	State of Fluidisation	97
Chapter-4	Modifications Proposed to Elucidate the Hydrodynamics of Single Spherical Particle Settling in Fluids and Fluid- isation	99
4.0.0	Hydrodynamics of a spherical Particle Settling in a Fluid of Infinite Extent	99
4.1.0	Modified Drag Coefficient	99
4.1.1	Modified Drag Coefficient in the Creeping Flow Region	101
4.1.2	Modified Drag Coefficient in the Newton's Law Region	102
4.1.3	Modified drag Curve	102
4.1.4	Magnitude of Viscous and Inertial Drag	104
4.2.0	Fluid of Finite Extent	105
4.2.1	Average Relative Velocity of Settling	105
4.3.0	Hydrodynamics of Fluidisation	107
4.3.1	Pressure Drop	107
4.3.2	Average Relative Velocity of Fluidisation	108
4.3.3	Average Area Fraction for Fluid Flow through Fluidised Beds	110

4.3.4	Minimum Voidage of a Fully Supported Bed of Particles	111
Chapter-5	Results and Discussion	113
5.0.0	Introduction	113
5.1.0	Hydrodynamics of Free Settling	115
5.1.1	Physical Significance of Modified Drag Curve	115
5.1.2	Magnitude of Viscous and Inertial drag	120
5.1.3	Modification of Maxworthy's Approach to the drag phenomenon	121
5.2.0	Hydrodynamics of a solid particle settling in a fluid of finite extent	123
5.2.1	Average Relative Velocity of Settling	123
5.3.0	Hydrodynamics of Fluidisation	126
5.3.1	Pressure Drop	126
5.3.2	Drag Forces in Fluidised Beds	131
5.3.3	Physical Significance of Exponent 'n' in the Richardson-Zaki Correlation	133
5.3.4	Terminal Velocity versus Elutriation Velocity	136
5.4.0	Origin of Pervoids and Bubbles in Fluidised Systems	138

5.4.1	Origin of Parvoids in Liquid-Solid Fluidised Beds	138
5.4.2	Origin of Bubbles in Gas-Solid Fluidised Beds	140
Chapter-6	Conclusions and Recommendations for Future Work	142
6.0.0	Introduction	142
6.1.0	Hydrodynamics of Free Settling	143
6.2.0	Hydrodynamics of Fluidisation	144
6.3.0	Recommendations for Future work	146
Appendix-A	Specifications of Equipments Circuit Diagram of Porosity Measurement System Calibration Curve for the Rotameters	148
Appendix-B	Data, Standard Drag Curve and Modified Drag Curve C_d and C_{dm} Calculated from Experimental Data of Pinchbeck and Popper Calculated Values of $D/D_s - 1$ from Literature	152
	References	158
	About the Author	175