FABRICATION OF ADVANCED EMI SHIELDING MATERIALS

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College : JSS Science and Technology University, Mysuru
Branch : Electronics and Communications Engineering
Guide : Prof. Supreetha M
Student(s) : Mr. Akshay K S
Mr. Niteesh H D
Mr. Thejas M V
Mr. Praveen Vantagodi

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Preamble:

With the exponential growth of electronic devices and wireless technologies, managing electromagnetic interference (EMI) has become a critical concern across multiple high-tech industries. Traditional metal-based shielding materials, though effective, fall short in meeting the demands for flexibility, reduced weight, and adaptability in modern electronic applications. This has driven a shift toward the development of advanced polymer-based composites integrated with nanofillers, which promise enhanced shielding effectiveness without compromising mechanical performance or design versatility. This project proposes the fabrication and systematic analysis of such lightweight, flexible EMI shielding materials, aiming to address current limitations and enable broader application in fields such as telecommunications, consumer electronics, and automotive systems.

Introduction:

The rapid expansion of electronic devices and wireless communication systems has intensified the challenge of electromagnetic interference (EMI), which can disrupt device functionality and pose safety hazards in critical environments. As technology advances, the demand for lightweight and flexible EMI shielding materials has grown, particularly in industries where space and weight constraints are paramount. Traditional shielding materials, such as metals, are often heavy and rigid, making them unsuitable for modern applications. Consequently, the exploration of polymer-based composites with nanofillers has gained significant attention as a promising alternative for achieving effective EMI shielding.

Recent research highlights conductive polymers and hybrid fillers as potential solutions for EMI shielding, offering improved mechanical, thermal, and electrical properties. However, optimizing material composition, thickness, and shielding performance remains a challenge. By incorporating nanofillers into polymer matrices, researchers aim to develop materials that provide superior shielding effectiveness at minimal thickness while maintaining flexibility and durability. The motivation for this project stems from the need to create advanced shielding materials that minimize electromagnetic leakage and interference while ensuring ease of fabrication and adaptability for various applications.

This project focuses on the fabrication of a polymer composite using nanofillers designed at an optimal thickness to enhance EMI shielding efficiency. The study aims to investigate the morphological, electrical, and mechanical properties of the resulting composite materials. Additionally, the shielding effectiveness of these composites will be systematically measured and analyzed to determine their suitability for real-world applications. A systematic methodology, encompassing material selection, preparation, characterization, and evaluation, will be followed to ensure the development of high-performance shielding materials.

The successful development of lightweight EMI shielding composites through this research could have a profound impact on industries such as telecommunications, consumer electronics, and automotive technology. By enhancing shielding efficiency in a lightweight and flexible form, these materials could improve the reliability and performance of sensitive electronic components. In telecommunications, they can prevent signal distortion and maintain data integrity, while in consumer electronics, they can enable the development of compact yet efficient devices. Furthermore, in automotive applications, these materials could contribute to the advancement of vehicle connectivity, autonomous driving technology, and battery management systems, ultimately setting new standards in EMI management for next-generation electronic applications.

Objectives:

1. To fabricate a polymer composite using nanofillers designed at optimal thickness.

2. To study morphological, electrical, mechanical, properties resulting composite materials.

3. To measure and analyse the shielding effectiveness resulting composite materials.

Methodology:

To achieve effective EMI shielding using polymer composites, a systematic approach is essential. This methodology encompasses material selection, preparation, characterization, and evaluation processes aimed at optimizing the composite's performance. The following steps outline the detailed procedures involved in this project.

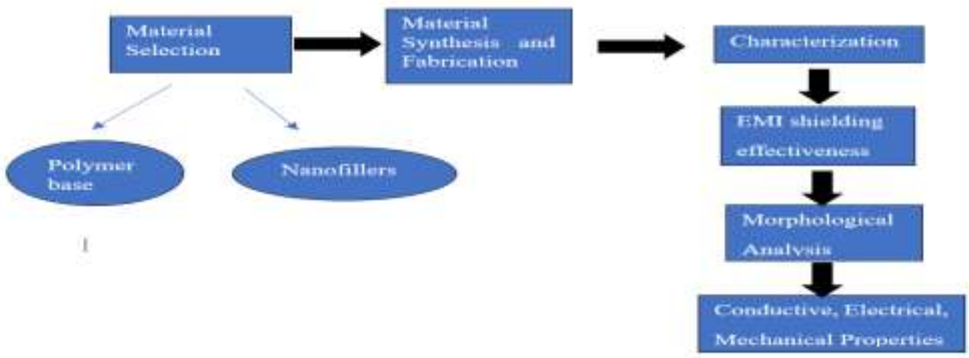


Figure 1: Block diagram of the proposed method

Procedure:

To prepare a polyvinyl alcohol (PVA) solution by dissolving 4 grams of PVA powder in 120 milliliters of water, follow these steps carefully to ensure a smooth and consistent mixture.

Begin by gathering all necessary materials. You will need 4 grams of PVA powder, 120 mL of distilled water, a heat-resistant beaker (preferably 250 mL or larger), a stirring rod or magnetic stirrer, a hot plate or other suitable heating source, and a thermometer. For safety, it's also recommended to wear protective gloves and goggles.

Start by pouring the 120 mL of distilled water into the heat-resistant beaker. Place the beaker on the hot plate and begin to heat the water. Monitor the temperature closely using a thermometer, and allow the water to heat up to a range of 80 to 90 degrees Celsius. It is important not to let the water boil, as boiling can cause excessive evaporation and may interfere with the solubility of the polymer.

Once the water reaches the desired temperature, begin adding the PVA powder gradually. Sprinkle the powder into the hot water a little at a time while stirring continuously. This step is crucial, as adding the powder too quickly or without stirring can lead to the formation of clumps, which are difficult to dissolve later on. If you are using a magnetic stirrer, allow it to rotate continuously. Otherwise, use a glass stirring rod to keep the mixture moving.

Continue stirring the mixture for 15 to 30 minutes while maintaining the temperature between 80 and 90°C. The solution will initially appear cloudy, but as the PVA dissolves, it will gradually become more transparent and viscous. The time required for full dissolution can vary depending on the grade of PVA and the stirring efficiency.

After all the PVA has fully dissolved and the solution appears clear and uniform, turn off the heat and remove the beaker from the hot plate. Allow the solution to cool naturally to room temperature before using it. Cooling is necessary to prevent any damage to sensitive applications or materials that may be affected by high temperatures.

.Sample	**PVA**	**PANI**	**Ce(NO3)2**	**GNP**
H1	4g (5)	0.2g (5)	0.2g (5)	0.2g (5)
H2	4g (10)	0.2g (10)	0.2g (10)	0.4g (10)
H3	4g (10)	0.2g (10)	0.4g (10)	0.2g (10)
H4	4g (20)	0.2g (20)	0.2g (20)	0.8g (20)

H5	4g (20)	0.2g (20)	0.8g (20)	0.2g (20)
H0	4g	0.2g	-	-

PVA-Based Composite Formulations

Result and Conclusion:

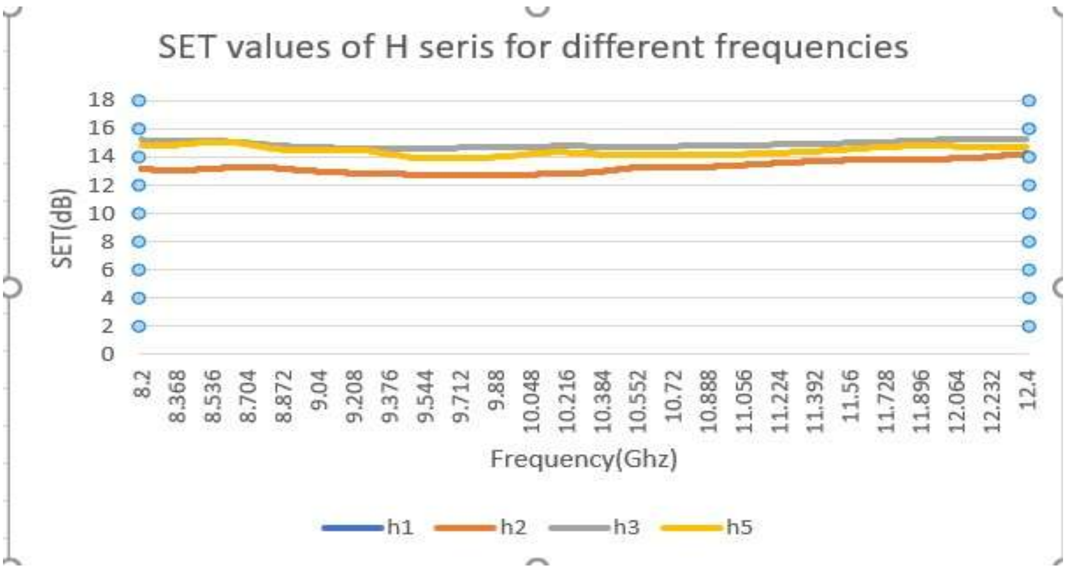
The following table presents the SET (Standard Error of Transfer) values for different H series (h1, h2, h3, h5) across a frequency range from 8.2 GHz to 12.8 GHz. This data is derived from the graph showing how the SET values for each series change with frequency. The table organizes the frequency values on the left and the corresponding SET values for each of the four H series (h1, h2, h3, h5) in the columns to the right. Each SET value is represented in decibels (dB), with slight fluctuations observed across the different series. These fluctuations are more prominent in the h5 series (yellow in the graph), which shows greater variation as the frequency increases compared to the other series. The data in this table allows for easy comparison of how each H series performs over the given frequency range, providing insights into frequency-dependent behavior.

Frequency (GHz)	**h1 (SET in dB)**	**h2 (SET in dB)**	**h3 (SET in dB)**	**h5 (SET in dB)**
8.2	15.0	14.5	13.8	16.0
8.36	14.8	14.3	13.6	15.8
8.704	15.1	14.6	13.7	16.1
8.872	15.2	14.7	13.9	16.2
9.028	15.1	14.5	13.8	16.0
9.28	15.0	14.4	13.7	15.9
9.544	14.9	14.3	13.6	15.8
9.72	14.9	14.4	13.7	15.9
9.88	14.8	14.3	13.6	15.8
10.048	14.7	14.2	13.5	15.7
10.296	14.6	14.1	13.4	15.6
10.536	14.6	14.1	13.5	15.6
10.792	14.5	14.0	13.4	15.5

11.048	14.5	14.0	13.4	15.5
11.296	14.4	13.9	13.3	15.4
11.552	14.3	13.8	13.2	15.3
11.792	14.2	13.7	13.1	15.2
12.048	14.1	13.6	13.0	15.1
12.296	14.0	13.5	12.9	15.0
12.528	13.9	13.4	12.8	14.9
12.792	13.8	13.3	12.7	14.8
13.04	13.7	13.2	12.6	14.7

SET Values of H Series across Different Frequencies

Upon analyzing the table, it is evident that the SET values for all series remain relatively stable throughout the frequency range, with only minor deviations. The h1, h2, and h3 series exhibit a gradual decrease in their SET values as frequency increases, with minimal fluctuation. In contrast, the h5 series (yellow) shows noticeable fluctuations, especially in the higher frequencies, suggesting that this series is more sensitive to frequency changes.



Graph of SET Values for H Series

These variations could be important for applications requiring consistent performance, as they might influence the system's behavior in real-world scenarios. The table provides a clear numeric representation of these trends, helping to visualize the overall behavior of each series across the tested frequency range.

The data in the table mirrors the graph and can be further analyzed for more detailed insights. It is valuable for understanding the frequency-dependent behavior of the H series and identifying any potential issues that could arise in practical applications, such as communications or signal processing. This information could be essential for optimizing system designs, minimizing error rates, and ensuring consistent performance across a broad frequency spectrum. By providing both graphical and numerical representations of the data, this table serves as an accessible reference for deeper analysis and comparison of the SET values across the different H series.

Future Scope:

The successful fabrication of lightweight EMI shielding materials is expected to significantly benefit multiple industries.

1.**Telecommunications:**

- Prevents signal distortion.
- Maintains data integrity for more reliable communication.

2.Consumer Electronics:

- Enables development of smaller, more efficient devices.
- Enhances device functionality without increasing size or weight.

3.Automotive Industry:

- Improves the reliability and safety of electronic systems.
- Supports vehicle connectivity and autonomous driving technologies.
- Enhances battery management systems for electric vehicles.

4. Overall, the materials can enhance the performance, reliability, and lifespan of sensitive electronic components.

5. The project's outcomes could help establish new industry standards for EMI management in next-generation electronics.

Project Outcome & Industry Relevance

The project aims to successfully fabricate a lightweight, flexible polymer composite integrated with nanofillers for effective EMI shielding. The expected outcome includes the development of materials with superior shielding effectiveness, mechanical strength, and electrical conductivity at minimal thickness. These materials will be evaluated for their morphological, electrical, and mechanical properties to ensure optimal performance in real-world conditions.

Industry relevance is significant, as the developed composites address critical challenges in managing electromagnetic interference across various sectors. In telecommunications, they can prevent signal loss and improve data transmission reliability. In consumer electronics, the materials support miniaturization while maintaining performance and safety. In the automotive industry, they can enhance the durability and efficiency of electronic systems vital for autonomous driving, vehicle connectivity, and EV battery management.By delivering high-performance shielding in a lightweight, adaptable form, this project supports next-generation technology requirements, setting new benchmarks for EMI management and material innovation in advanced electronics applications.

Working Model vs. Simulation/Study:

This project primarily involved the development of a physical working model. The polymer composite embedded with nanofillers was fabricated in a laboratory setting and tested for its electromagnetic interference (EMI) shielding effectiveness. Various characterization techniques were used to analyze the composite's structural, electrical, and mechanical properties, providing practical, hands-on validation of the material's performance.

Project Outcomes and Learnings:

- Successfully fabricated a lightweight, flexible polymer composite for EMI shielding.

- Achieved promising results in terms of shielding effectiveness and material durability.
- Gained practical experience in material preparation, nanofiller dispersion, and composite fabrication techniques.
- Learned how to use characterization tools to assess morphological, electrical, and mechanical properties.
- Understood the relationship between nanofiller content, material thickness, and shielding performance.
- Developed skills in critical analysis, data interpretation, and technical reporting.
- Realized the industrial importance of designing materials that balance performance, weight, and flexibility.
- Strengthened problem-solving abilities by overcoming challenges in material uniformity and testing accuracy.