

Experimental Evaluation of Activated Charcoal by Solar Collector

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Abstract

Recent years public interest in issue related to concern for the environment and energy saving. Due to the problem creating with the use of alternative source of energy, fossil fuel has become important and relevant in this competition. These sources, such as ocean wave, the sun, wind, can never be exhausted and are called renewable energy source. They also have known as non convectional sources of energy because it cause very less pollution and are available locally. The approach was to consider various aspects ranging from the analysis of the current energy consumption and the state of possible installation of a solar parabolic dish collector and their different uses. It is commonly assumed that dish type solar pressure cooker save energy and make a nutrient rich food. The energy concentration of dish solar collector has rarely been analyzed including their embodied energy. The energy provided by the dish collector has never integrated with regeneration of desiccant. The approach has been used to develop a parabolic dish collector integrated with the regeneration of desiccant material like activated charcoal.

Keywords

Solar Parabolic Dish Collector (SPDC); Desiccant; Regeneration; Solar Energy; (SE) Activated Charcoal ;(AC)

I. Introduction

Energy is a central part of every human beings daily life either it is in the form of chemical energy (food), thermal energy (heat), or electricity. We all depend on a constant and reliable supply of energy - for our homes, businesses and for transport. But have you ever thought about the source of the energy you use? The world's primary energy sources consist of fossil fuels such as oil, natural gas and coal. The majority of the UK's electricity comes from burning fossil fuels (e.g. coal, oil and gas) which is a major contributor to climate change. The mix of fuel sources has changed significantly in the last 50 years. In 1950, about 90 per cent of our electricity came from coal; but today, coal accounts for only about 33 per cent. Gas now provides a large proportion, with oil and nuclear making up the rest and renewable energy accounting for only about 3.5 per cent. Unfortunately, combustion of fossil fuel release carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other green house gases, as well as Pollutants that have contributed to environmental problem such as global warming, air and water pollution and other damage to Earth eco system formatter will need to create these components, incorporating the applicable criteria that follow.

A. Parabolic Dish Collector

A parabolic dish collector is a point-focus collector that tracks the sun in two axes, concentrating solar energy onto a receiver located at the focal point of the dish. The dish structure must track fully the sun to reflect the beam into the thermal receiver. For this purpose tracking mechanisms are employed in double so as the collector is tracked in two axes. The receiver absorbs the radiant solar energy, converting it into thermal energy in a circulating fluid. The thermal energy can then either be converted into electricity using an engine- generator coupled directly to the receiver, or it

can be transported through pipes to a central power-conversion system. Parabolic-dish systems can achieve temperatures in excess of 1500°C. Because the receivers are distributed throughout a collector field, like parabolic troughs, parabolic dishes are often called distributed-receiver systems.

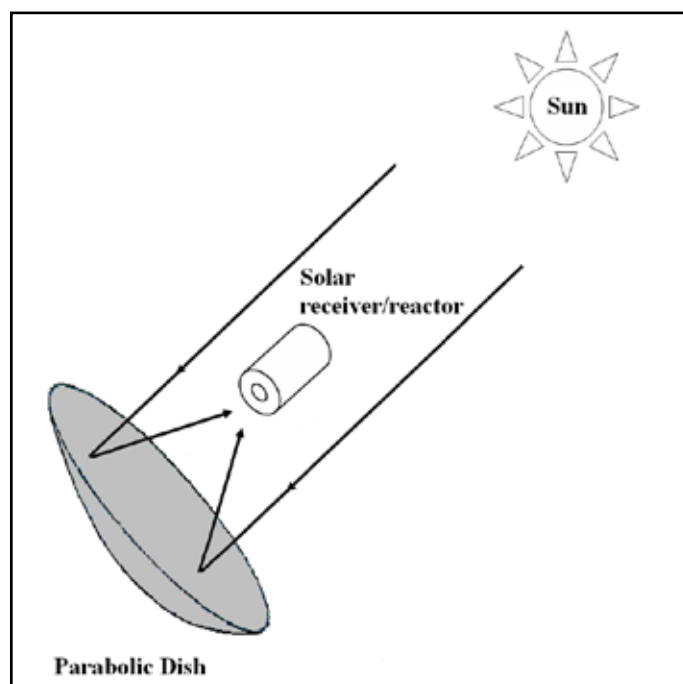


Fig. 1: Parabolic Dish Collector

Parabolic dishes have several important advantages:

1. Because they are always pointing the sun, they are the most efficient of all collector systems.
 2. They typically have concentration ratio in the range of 600–2000, and thus are highly efficient a thermal-energy absorption and power conversion systems.
 3. They have modular collector and receiver units that can either function independently or as part of a larger system of dishes.
- In this work we use a point concentrator type solar collector, which concentrates all the direct and diffuse radiation falls on the spherical dish of the reflector to the small absorber area of the collector. The concentration ratio of the parabolic dish collector is very high than the other type of solar collector. The temperature of the absorber is very high up to 500°C. This high temperature of the absorber is due its black surface and it is suitable to regenerate the desiccant material without the use of any high grade energy. The desiccant is regenerate only due to the high temperature without any hot air flow through them. The solid desiccant is further used to produce dry air.

B. Desiccants

Many materials are desiccants; that is they attract and hold water vapor. Wood, natural fibers, clays, and many synthetics attract and release moisture like commercial desiccants do, but they lack the holding capacity of some special desiccant materials.

For example, woolen carpet fibers attract up to 23% of their dry weight in water vapor, and nylon can take up almost 6 % of its weight in water. In contrast, a commercial desiccant takes up between 10 and 1100% of its dry weight in water vapor, depending on its type. Furthermore, commercial desiccants continue to attract moisture even when the surrounding air is relatively dry, a characteristic that other materials do not share. All desiccants behave in a similar way in that they attract moisture until they reach equilibrium with the surrounding air. Moisture is usually removed from the desiccant by heating it to temperatures between 48.8°C and 260°C and exposing it to a scavenger airstream. After the desiccant dries, it must be cooled so it can attract moisture once again. Sorption refers to the binding of one substance to another. It always generates sensible heat equal to the latent heat of water vapor taken up by the desiccant, plus an additional heat of sorption that varies between 5 and 25 % of the latent heat of the water vapor. This heat is transferred to the desiccant and the surrounding air.

C. Types of Desiccants

Desiccants can be basically divided in two categories

1. Liquid Desiccant

Liquid desiccants are solution that has a high affinity for water vapour. Liquid desiccant are very strong solutions of the ionic salts lithium chloride and calcium chloride. It has been used in industrial dehumidifier and is used to produce the dry air without any over cooling it. In standard practice, the behavior of a liquid desiccant can be controlled by adjusting its concentration, its temperature, or both. Desiccant temperature is controlled by simple heaters and coolers. Concentration is controlled by heating the desiccant to drive moisture out into a waste air stream or directly to the ambient. As a practical matter, however, the absorption process is limited by the surface area of a desiccant exposed to the air being dehumidified and the contact time allowed for the reaction. More surface area and more contact time allow the desiccant to approach its theoretical capacity. Commercial desiccant systems reflect these realities either by spraying the desiccant onto an extended surface much like in a cooling tower, or holding a solution in a rotating extended surface with a large solution capacity.

2. Solid Desiccant

Adsorbents are solid materials with a tremendous internal surface area per unit of mass; a single gram can have more than 50,000 ft² of surface area. Structurally, they resemble a rigid sponge, and the surface of the sponge in turn resembles the ocean coastline of a fjord. This analogy indicates the scale of the different surfaces in an adsorbent. The fjords can be compared to the capillaries in the adsorbent. The spaces between the grains of sand on the fjord beaches can be compared to the spaces between the individual molecules of the adsorbent, all of which have the capacity to hold water molecules. The bulk of the adsorbed water is contained by condensation into the capillaries, and the majority of the surface area that attracts individual water molecules is in the crystalline structure of the material itself. Adsorbents attract moisture because of the electrical field at the desiccant surface. The field is not uniform in either force or charge, so it attracts polarized water molecules that have an opposite charge from specific sites on the desiccant surface. When the complete surface is covered, the adsorbent can hold still more moisture, as vapor condenses into the first water layer and fills the capillaries throughout the material. As with liquid absorbents, the ability of an adsorbent to attract

moisture depends on how much water is on its surface compared to how much water is in the air. That difference is reflected in the vapor pressure at the surface and in the air. The adsorption behavior of solid adsorbents depends on (1) their total surface area, (2) the total volume of their capillaries, and (3) the range of their capillary diameters. A large surface area gives the adsorbent a larger capacity at low relative humidity. Large capillaries provide a high capacity for condensed water, which gives the adsorbent a higher capacity at high relative humidity. A narrow range of capillary diameters makes an adsorbent more selective in the vapor molecules it can attract and hold; thus, some will fit and others will be too large to pass through the passages in the material. There are many solid desiccant materials like silica gel, activated charcoal, activated charcoal, zeolite etc which perform very well in hot and humid climatic conditions of India.

II. Literature Review

The study of literature review is divided into the two parts:

- Analysis of Parabolic dish collector
- Analysis of Regeneration of solid desiccant

A. Analysis of Parabolic Dish Collector

Shuang-Ying Wu et al. [2009] they proposed a parabolic dish/AMTEC solar thermal power system and evaluated its overall thermal–electric conversion performance. The system was a combined system in which a parabolic dish solar collector was cascaded with an alkali metal thermal to electric converter (AMTEC) through a coupling heat exchanger. A separate type heat-pipe receiver was selected to isothermally transfer the solar energy from the collector to the AMTEC. To assess the system’s overall thermal–electric conversion performance, a theoretical analysis had been undertaken in conjunction with a parametric investigation by varying relevant parameters, i.e., the average operating temperature and performance parameters associated with the dish collector and the AMTEC. Dascomb J., [2009] give a dissertation on low cost solar parabolic collector which is used for producing the generation of steam and compare with the other renewable technology and found that solar parabolic concentrator give 80% better performance than any other technology and overall cost is minimum. Mo Wang and Kamran Siddiqui [2010] they presented three-dimensional model of parabolic dish-receiver system with argon gas as the working fluid was designed to simulate the thermal performance of a dish-type concentrated solar energy system. The temperature distributions of the receiver wall and the working gas are presented. The impact of the aperture size, inlet/outlet configuration of the solar receiver and the rim angle of the parabolic dish were investigated. The results show that the aperture size and different inlet/outlet configuration had a considerable impact on the receiver wall and gas temperatures, but the rim angle of the parabolic dish had negligible influence. Lovergrove.K.et al [2011] developed a new design of large 500m² solar parabolic concentrator with 13.4m focal length and altitude-azimuth tracking. It uses 380 identical spherical mirrors of 1.17m × 1.17m, which incorporate the glass- metal laminate mirror. Optical analysis shows that operation of receivers with geometric concentration ratio of at least 200 times should be possible. Y. Rafeeua and M.Z.A. Kadir., [2012] they developed three experimental models with various geometrical sizes and diameter of about 0.5 m of solar dish concentrators were used to analyze the effect of geometry on a solar irradiation and temperature and in maximizing the solar fraction under Malaysian environment. These models were used to analyze the performance of parabolic concentrating collector’s

parameters such as reflector materials, aperture diameter, depth of concentrator, size of focal point and temperature at the focal point with different solar irradiations to increase the thermal efficiency. The efficiencies were calculated and results were conclusive. The 3 M Silverlux aluminum films were much efficient than stainless steel and increasing the area of the concentrator gave much more considerable variation in the results.

B. Study of Regeneration of Solid Desiccant

[11]S. Techajunta et al., [1998] they suggested that this system worked better in tropical humid climate using regeneration process during the day and dehumidification during the night. An experimental investigated on the regeneration of solid desiccant bed with simulated solar energy in which incandescent electric bulbs were used to simulate solar irradiations. The regeneration rate was slightly affected by air flow rate but found to be strongly dependent on irradiation. In air dehumidification process, the dehumidification rate decreased with decrease in irradiation but slightly increased with air flow rate. H. Lounici, et al., [2000] Novel technique to regenerate activated charcoal bed saturated by fluoride ions. A novel technique to regenerate adsorbent column is presented. The process used was based on the utilization of an electrochemical cell which regenerates several saturated adsorbent bed. They presented the regeneration of the activated charcoal (AA) bed saturated by fluoride ions. The results obtained in this study demonstrated that desorption of fluoride from activated charcoal was a rapid process. A study of adsorption–regeneration cycles showed that the electrochemical technique was more efficient than current techniques. The electro desorption operation was successfully applied for fluoride desorption from saturated activated charcoal column by natural water with strong mineralization. Jia et al., [2007] developed a novel compound desiccant wheel made up of more hygroscopic composite material which worked under low regeneration temperature and had higher dehumidification capacity. The performance of this system was analyzed by a mathematical model and it was pointed out that this system could work under very low regeneration temperature having high COP. Hence, low grade thermal energy resources like solar energy, waste heat etc could be used to operate the system efficiently function well for phosphorus, because its inner porosity.

C. Objectives of Work

The objectives of this paper is as follows:

1. To experimentally investigate the regeneration performance of activated charcoal by parabolic dish collector in Indian climatic condition.
2. To experimentally investigate the adsorption performance of activated charcoal at normal room condition.

III. Experimental Setup and Working

A. Introduction

In this research paper, the regeneration and adsorption rates of two different solid desiccants (activated charcoal) for dehumidification of air have been proposed. The main objective in this research paper is to study the feasibility of regeneration of solid desiccants using solar parabolic dish collector. This solar parabolic dish collector is used to regenerate the solid desiccants (activated charcoal) at atmospheric air flow rates and experimental comparison of regeneration rate of two different solid desiccants. After that its air dehumidification performance are analyzed and compare the adsorption rate of activated charcoal at room condition. The

regeneration rate of two solid desiccants (activated charcoal) is experimentally investigated for two different days in the month of May for the same interval of time. The results of this experiment are presented in next chapter.

1. Components of Parabolic Dish Collector

The parabolic dish collector consists of the following component:

- Outer ring frame
- Aluminium foil reflector
- Supporting frame
- Tracking screw and wheel
- Absorber frame

(i). Outer Ring Frame

The outer ring frame of the parabolic dish collector is made of the mild steel circular channel. The diameter of the outer ring frame is 1.4m. At the top of the outer ring frame two steel plates are screwed for positioning the tracking screw. Inside the circular channel of the frame the aluminum foils are placed to form the reflector.

(ii). Aluminum Foil Reflector

Aluminum foil reflector is made by joining the 40 segments of the aluminum. These segments are joined with the help of screw from outer side and placed inside the outer ring frame by sliding with hand. Then these aluminum segments are screwed together at the inner side to form the parabolic shape of the reflector. The anodized aluminum material of the reflector has reflectivity greater than 80% and the optical efficiency of the collector is 40%.

(iii). Tracking Screw and Wheel

Tracking screw is situated on a steel plate which is connected to the supporting frame. Tracking of collector is done in a normal direction to sun by reducing the shadow of the tracking screw to zero. Wheel is also used for tracking of collector in a direction relative to the axial movement of sun. Wheel is connected at the bottom of the supporting frame by the screw.

(iv). Absorber Frame

The absorber frame is connected at the focus point of the collector with the help of steel rod which connected to the supporting frame. The absorber frame has fixed at their position at focus of the collector, it still remains at the same position during tracking. The absorber frame is move with the vertical angular movement of collector. All the radiation falls on the collector is concentrate at the absorber frame. Container used for the regeneration of the silica gel is placed on the absorber frame. The absorber area is shown in the fig. 2.

IV. Results and Discussion

In this research paper, the main focus is on the regeneration rate of two different solid desiccants (activated charcoal) by the parabolic dish collector and then the adsorption process of these materials at room air flow rate. The experimental data has been collected in the month of May 2013 during which the ambient temperature varied from 30 to 46 in most of the clear sky days (10:00 hr-20:00 hr). The tests were performed in the noon for regeneration and in room conditions for adsorption. The regeneration rate & adsorption rate of activated charcoal has been analyzed and their comparative performance is evaluated. Four cases are considered and various results have been obtained.

The regeneration rate (G_R) was monitored continuously throughout the experimental run by measuring the bulk weight of the dry solid desiccant(activated charcoal,) layers and the rate of change of moisture content of solid desiccant (dry basis) dw/dt [Pramuang et al., 2006].

$$G_R = \dot{m}_{ds} \frac{dw}{dt}$$

The adsorption rate (G_A) was monitored continuously throughout the experimental run by measuring the bulk weight of the humidified (wet) solid desiccant (activated charcoal) layers and the rate of change of moisture content of soild desiccant (wet basis), [Pramuang et al 2006].

$$G_A = \dot{m}_{ws} \frac{dw}{dt}$$

1. Regeneration Rate of Activated Charcoal Balls

Fig. 3 show the relation between the reduction of weight of activated charcoal balls and solar intensity over a period of time. The DBT and WBT of the ambient are 38°C and 26°C respectively at the starting of the experiment. The 1 kg activated charcoal balls is placed in the container and put at the absorber area of collector. The solar intensity are in the range of 690- 800 W/mm² during regeneration. The weight of the activated charcoal balls is reduce rapidly at initial stage due to sudden increase in the temperature and then it decrease with the constant rate as it attain steady regeneration temperature and at the end the slope of curve becomes zero due to evaporation of all the water present in the pores of activated charcoal balls. The result shows that reduction of weight in later is not much depended on the solar intensity.

Table 1: Variation of Weight of Activated Charcoal Balls and Solar Intensity With Time During Regeneration Process

Time (hour)	Weight (gram)	Solar intensity (W/m ²)
10:34	1000	729
10:38	988	730
10:42	986	734
10:46	982	746
10:50	978	770
10:54	972	768
10:58	970	777
11:02	964	780
11:06	962	803
11:10	960	798
11:14	960	801

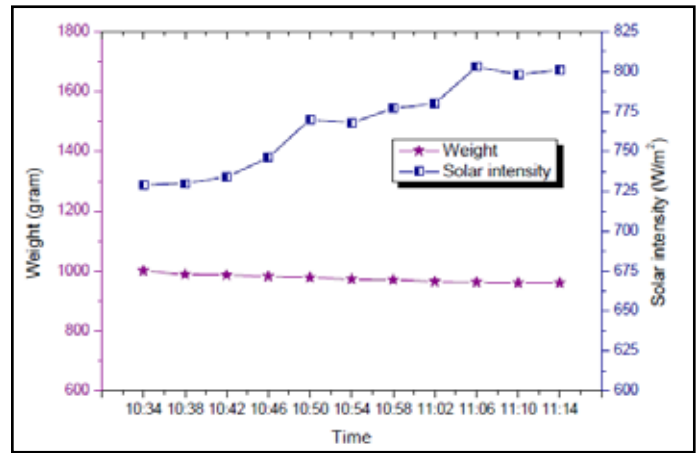


Fig. 5: Variation of Weight of Activated Charcoal and Solar Intensity With Time During Regeneration Process

Table 2: Variation of Regeneration Rate With Time for Activated Charcoal

Time (hour)	Regeneration rate (kg/hr)
10:34	0
10:38	0.18
10:42	0.03
10:46	0.06
10:50	0.06
10:54	0.09
10:58	0.03
11:02	0.09
11:06	0.03
11:10	0.03
11:14	0.03
11:18	0

Fig. 4 shows the variation of regeneration rate of activated charcoal during a passage of time. The regeneration rate is very high (0.24 kg/hr) in initial state due to the sudden increase in the temperature of activated charcoal which evaporate most of moisture from the pores of activated charcoal. After that it decreases with the time as the temperature attain steady state. After that there is continuous up and down variation in the regeneration rate with time due to presence of less amount of moisture content in the pores of activated charcoal and after some period of time regeneration

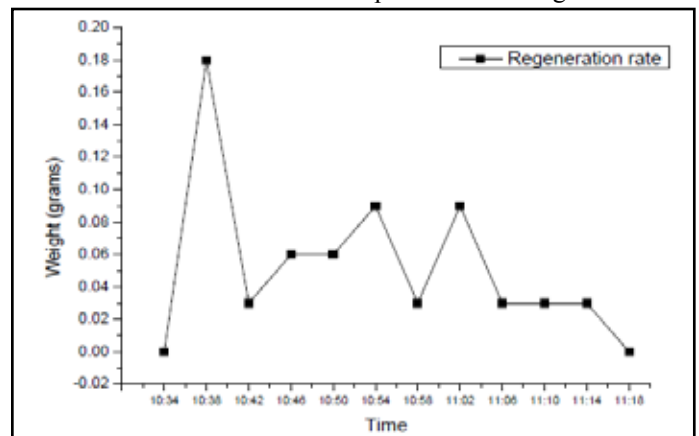


Fig. 6: Variation of Regeneration Rate With Time for Activated Charcoal

V. Conclusions

The main objective of this research paper is to calculate the regeneration rate and adsorption rate of activated charcoal for the same period of time in two day by parabolic dish collector. The result shows that solid desiccant is easily regenerate by solar energy without consuming any convectional source of energy. There are following conclusion has drawn from the experiment:

1. The regeneration rate is increasing sharply in the initial stage of experiment for the material activated charcoal.
2. The maximum regeneration rate is 0.24 kg/hr for activated charcoal. So it is concluded that regeneration rate of activated charcoal is better than other material. The results shows that maximum regeneration rate obtain for material activated charcoal is at 10:38 A.M for two days of experiment.
3. During regeneration process, the removals of moisture are so maximum for activated charcoal (54 g) for 1 kg of solid desiccants. During the adsorption process, maximum adsorption rate for activated charcoal is (0.0192 kg/hr).
4. In adsorption process, activated charcoal is adsorbed more moisture during the process.

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