

# Tensile properties of Al-Cu alloy with, Fly ash and Graphite Metal matrix Composite

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**ABSTRACT:** Metal Matrix Composites are engineered materials, produced by the mixture of two or more different materials to gain improved properties. In the current analysis, an Al-4.5% Cu alloy is used as the fly ash and graphite and matrix is reinforcement. Aluminium copper alloy matrix composites repel the much concentration due to their high thermal conductivity, lightness, moderate making temperature etc. graphite powders and fly ash is used since its low density and high strength. The composite was formed using stir casting approach. The fly ash was added in 3%, 6%, and 9 % by weight and graphite was added in 3%, 6%, and 9 % by weight to the molten metal. The composite was tested for mechanical properties. Microstructure investigation was done using a scanning electron microscope to gain the distribution of graphite and fly ash in the aluminium matrix. The results found an increase in tensile strength and hardness with increasing the graphite and fly ash content. The density reduces with increasing graphite and fly ash content. Resistance to dry wear with increasing fly ash and graphite content. Specimen is made-up at different weight percentages and to be carried out for wear and mechanical properties.

**KEYWORDS:** Wear, Metal matrix, Composites, Fly ash, Graphite.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Metal matrix composites (MMCs) are advanced materials produced from a combination of two or more materials (one of which is a metal and the other a non-metal) in which tailored properties are realized. MMCs have received considerable attention in recent years due to their high strength, stiffness, and low density. Data related to mechanical properties, wear, microstructure, etc., have been cited in the literature. It has been reported that particle size and wear parameters (sliding speed, material property, normal load) influence the wear of the material [1–3]. A variety of particles such as mica, Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, graphite, and SiC have been used as reinforcement materials with aluminium alloys [4–8] as the matrices. The use of fly ash as a reinforcement material [9] results in improvement of mechanical properties of the composite. An extensive review on dry sliding wear characteristics of composites based on aluminium alloy was undertaken by Sannino et al. [10] and of their abrasive wear behaviour by Deuis [11]. Fly ash was separated into cenosphere and precipitator fly ash. The use of precipitator fly ash in aluminium decreases the density of composites and increases their wear resistance [12]. The composite was prepared by stir casting. Graphite and fly ash is used as reinforcement materials [13]. Aluminium matrix and graphite composites are advanced engineering materials with enhanced mechanical and physical properties [14]. The cooling rate of a casting is primarily a function of its section size, pouring temperature, and the material mould ability to absorb the heat. Increasing the cooling rate significantly influences the as-cast structure (refines both the graphite size and matrix structure) and therefore the mechanical properties and increase the cooling factor, which result in a higher hardness, decrease the strength and castings machinability can be severely impaired[15-16]. The many favourable mechanical, electrical, thermal, and biocompatible properties of graphite render it as an important material. Besides energy dissipation, many types of friction also cause the removal of material from either or both contacting surfaces; this phenomenon is referred to as “wear”[17-18].

# International Journal of Innovative Research in Science, Engineering and Technology

(A High Impact Factor, Monthly, Peer Reviewed Journal)

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Vol. 7, Issue 4, April 2018

Al6061-Graphite composite increasing amount of Graphite has resulted in increase in hardness. The dispersed Graphite and SiC in Al6061 alloy contributed in enhancing the tensile strength of the composites [19-21]. However, in case of The tensile strength is a function of volume fraction of reinforcement. As volume fraction of reinforcement increases tensile strength of composite increases. Graphite imparts excellent self lubricating property to the hybrid composite [20-24]. This results from the graphite and Fly ash particulate being able to adjust in the metal-free space (porosity) during quenching, resulting in a lower dislocation density. This reduces the amount of heterogeneous nucleation volume around the particulates and thus retards the rate of precipitation [25-26]. In the present investigation, Al-4.5% Cu alloy with fly ash (as received from thermal power plant) as particulates were successfully fabricated using the stir casting method. Mechanical properties and dry sliding wear behaviour of the MMCs were investigated. Under these conditions, fragment of reinforcement can act as a third body that increases the aggressiveness. However, stir casting is the simplest and most economical method. It has been suggested to develop composite materials have the capacity to achieve low friction and wear at the contact interface without any external supply of lubrication during the sliding. The addition of reinforcement to aluminium matrix drastically alters mechanical, tribological and corrosion properties.[27-31].

## II. EXPERIMENTAL

Aluminium with 4.5% Cu alloy was selected as the matrix material. The chemical composition of Al-4.5% Cu alloy is given in Table 1. Fly ash was used as the reinforcement and its composition is given in Table 2. The average particle size was found to be 10  $\mu\text{m}$ . The density of fly ash was found to be 2.09  $\text{g}/\text{cm}^3$ . Fig. 1 shows SEM micrographs of fly ash particulates.

Table 1. Chemical composition of Al-4.5% Cu alloy

Cu	Mg	Si	Fe	Mn	Ti	Zn	Al
4.5	1.20	0.40	0.64	0.10	0.10	0.20	Balance

Table 2. Chemical composition of fly ash in weight percentages

$\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$	$\text{SiO}_2$	$\text{Fe}_2\text{O}_3$	$\text{TiO}_2$	Loss on ignition
30.40	58.41	8.44	2.75	1.43

Chemical composition of graphite is the purest form of carbon. The metal matrix composite was prepared by stir casting. The billets of Al-4.5% Cu alloy were taken in a graphite crucible and melted in an electric furnace. The temperature was slowly increased to 860  $^\circ\text{C}$ . The melt was degassed at 800  $^\circ\text{C}$  with a solid dry hexachloroethane ( $\text{C}_2\text{Cl}_6$ , 0.5 wt. %) degasser. The molten metal was stirred to create a vortex and the particulates were introduced. The degassed molten metal was kept below the stirrer and stirred near about 450 rpm. The preheated fly ash particles were poured into the melt. Small pieces of Mg chips (0.5 wt. %) were introduced to the molten metal to see to it that good wet ability of particles with the molten metal. The percentage of fly ash added in terms of 3, 6, and 9 wt. % and also the percentage of graphite added was 3, 6, and 9 wt. %. The stirred scattered molten metal was put into preheated S.G. iron moulds 25, 37, and 50 mm in diameter and 200 mm length, cooled to room temperature in atmospheric pressure.

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Vol. 7, Issue 4, April 2018

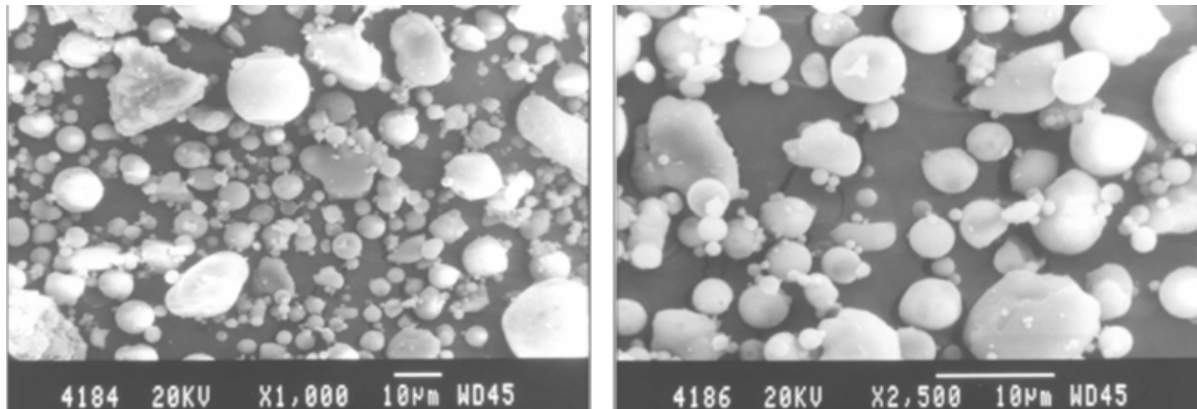


Fig. 1. SEM of fly ash particulates

Composites that were produced were subjected to solutionisation and age hardening (T6). The castings were heated to 525 °C and held for 17 hours, tempered in warm water, then reheated to 175 °C and kept for 18 hours. They were sectioned and test samples were prepared for various tests. Archimedes principle was used to measure the densities of the specimens. Brinell hardness tester determines their hardness. The load of 250 kg using a 5 mm steel ball indenter was used to measure the hardness. Scanning electron microscope is used to determine the microstructure of the MMC'S. at various locations across the specimen to examine the distribution of fly ash and graphite in the matrix. Tensile strengths is determined using a 20 kN computerized UTM with an electronic extensometer as per ASTM E-8 standards. Online plotting of load versus extension was done continuously through a data acquisition system (DAS).

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Tensile Properties

Table 3 shows the variation of tensile strength of the composites with the different weight fractions of fly ash and graphite particles. It can be noted that the tensile strength increased with an increase in the weight percentage of fly ash. It can also be noted that the tensile strength increases with an increase in the weight percentage of graphite. Increase in percentage of fly ash and graphite will also increase the tensile strength as it has been observed. Therefore the fly ash particles act as barriers to the dislocations when taking up the load applied (Basavarajappa et al., 2004; Seah et al. 1995). The hard fly ash particles obstruct the advancing dislocation front, thereby strengthening the matrix (Suresh et al., 2003). Its observed that the improvement in tensile strength of the composite is attributed to the fact that the filler fly ash and graphite posses higher strength and toughness. Table 3 shows the tensile test result of 25mm diameter rod,37mm diameter & 50mm diameter.

Table 3.Tensile Test Results

Sl no	Composition%	Tensile Strength(N/mm <sup>2</sup> )		
		Dia25mm	Dia37mm	Dia50mm
1.	Flyash 3% Graphite 3%	100.49	119.33	105.88
2.	Flyash 3% Graphite 6%	109.68	145.10	189.88
3.	Flyash 3% Graphite 9%	119.4	149.33	200.52

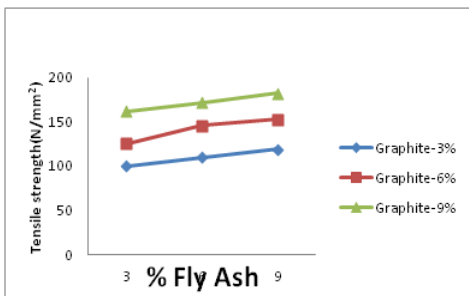
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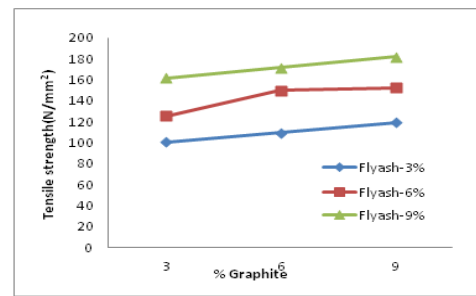
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Vol. 7, Issue 4, April 2018

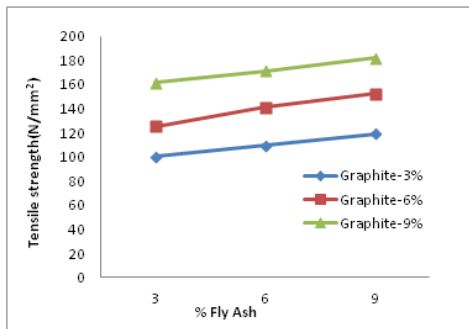
4.	Flyash 6% Graphite 3%	125.33	180.99	95.94
5.	Flyash 6% Graphite 6%	149.92	183.4	128.33
6.	Flyash 6% Graphite 9%	152.52	206.97	154.96
7.	Flyash 9% Graphite 3%	161.67	171.57	143.46
8.	Flyash 9% Graphite 6%	171.57	181.98	201.25
9.	Flyash 9% Graphite 9%	181.98	260.30	201.28



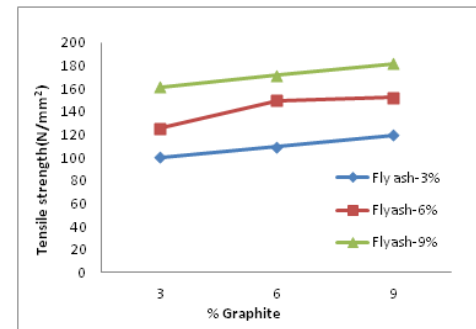
(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

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Vol. 7, Issue 4, April 2018

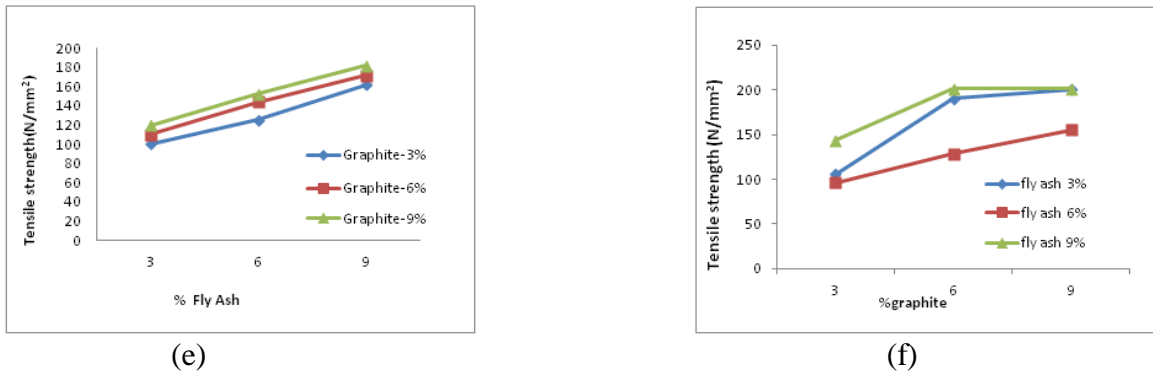


Fig. 2. Tensile properties of composites (a) Tensile strength v/s % of fly ash in 25mm diameter (b) Tensile strength v/s % of graphite in 25mm diameter (c) Tensile strength v/s % of fly ash in 37mm diameter (d) Tensile strength v/s % of graphite in 37mm diameter (e) Tensile strength v/s % of fly ash in 50 mm (f) Tensile Strength v/s % of graphite in 50mm diameter

### 3.2 Microstructure

As the microstructure plays an important role in the overall performance of a composite and the physical properties depend on the microstructure, reinforcement particle size, shape and distribution in the alloy, the prepared samples were examined using fly ash and graphite particulates could be seen in the SEM photomicrograph as shown in fig 5.

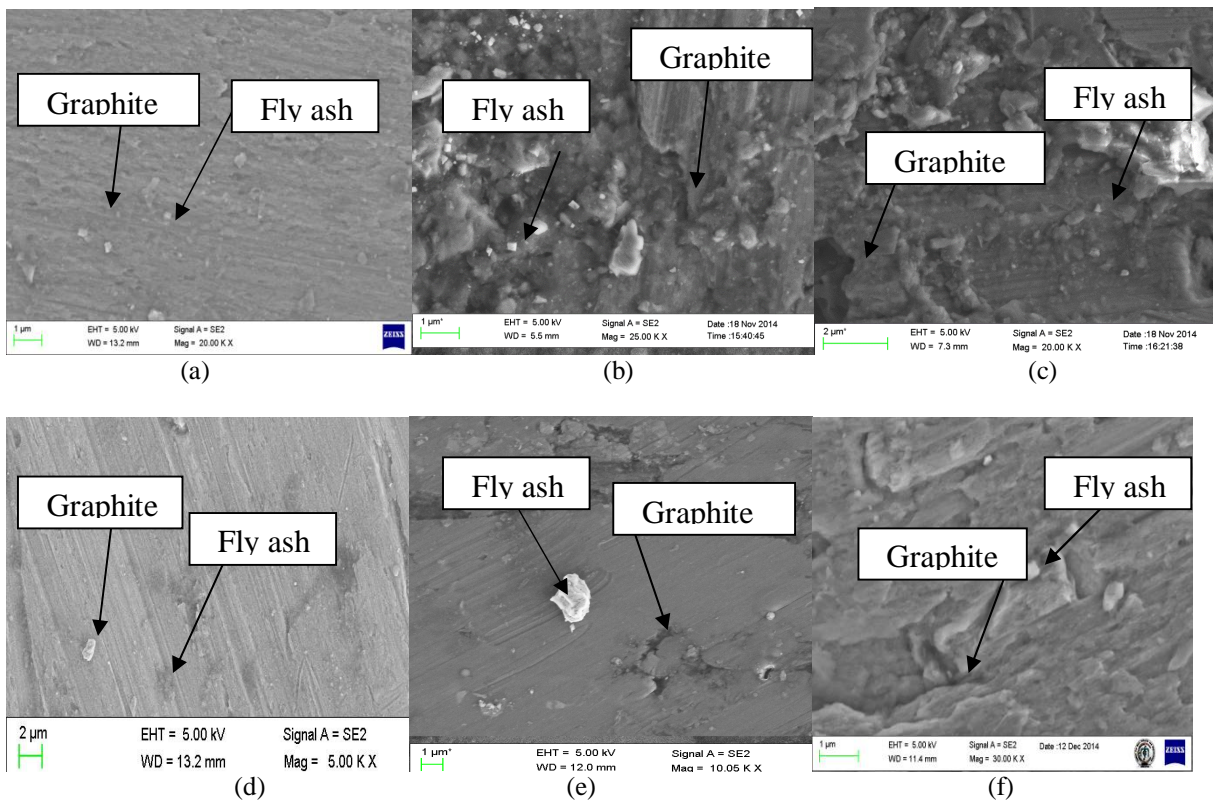


Fig. 5 SEM photomicrograph (a) diameter 50mm flyash3%.graphite 3% (b)diameter 37mm flyash 3% graphite 6% (c)50mm diameter flyash 6% graphite 3% (d) diameter 37 mm flyash6% graphite 6% (e) diameter 25mm flyash 9% graphite 3% (f) diameter 25mm flyash 6% graphite 6%

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Vol. 7, Issue 4, April 2018

### IV. CONCLUSION

1. Al-4.5% Cu alloy MMC's containing up to 9% fly ash and 9% graphite particles were easily fabricated. A uniform distribution of fly ash and graphite was observed in the matrix.
2. As the percentage of graphite increases the tensile strength also increases.
3. As the percentage of fly ash increases the tensile strength also increases.
4. By the observation of SEM graphite and fly ash uniformly distributed.
5. As the percentage of fly ash and graphite increases the tensile strength also increases.

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