

Effect of Polymer Modification on Mechanical and Structural Properties of Concrete – An Experimental Investigation

V.A.Konapure¹, P.N.Pawar², A.B.Patil³, M.R.Salunke⁴, B.M.Wagh⁴, Prof.I.M.Jain⁵

Graduate Student, Department of Civil, JSPM NTC, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune, India¹

Graduate Student, Department of Civil, JSPM NTC, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune, India²

Graduate Student, Department of Civil, JSPM NTC, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune, India³

Graduate Student, Department of Civil, JSPM NTC, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune, India⁴

HOD, Department of Civil, JSPM NTC, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune, India⁵

ABSTRACT: Recently, a number of researches have involved improving the concrete technology requirements through advanced research. These studies involved high strength concrete HSC, were highly dependent on the quality of ingredient– materials. HSC production potentially involves several trial mixes and uses high quantities of fine materials thus making it very costly and time consuming. The objectives of this study were to reduce the production cost, time required and to improve HSC properties by providing control mixes and using Orthophthalic polyester resin as partial cement replacement. This was done by experimentally investigating the HSC production using 10%, 20% and 30% replacement of cement by Orthophthalic polyester resin and selecting the optimum replacement content. All concrete mixes were homogeneous in fresh concrete state, did not show any sign of segregation and maintains slump between 80-110mm. Orthophthalic polyester resin additions further improved the workability. At the age 90 days, all concrete mixes achieved the cube compressive strength between 72 to 120MPa. Tensile and flexural strength were increased using Orthophthalic polyester resin using Orthophthalic polyester resin. Higher strength concrete showed low ductility because the ultimate strain was found less than 0.35%, there was In General 20% Orthophthalic polyester resin content was found the optimum.

KEYWORDS: production, Orthophthalic polyester resin, optimum, compressive strength and flexural strength, Split tensile strength.

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper presents the effect of different polymers on structural and mechanical properties of concrete. The aim of this study is to investigate the mechanical and flexural properties of polymer modified concrete. Two different types of polymers are used at different dosages to modify the cement concrete matrix. Besides, a series of tests without modification was also carried out. By means of four point loading method, the flexural strength and flexural properties of polymer modified concrete are measured. The influence of different polymers and its optimum dosage in respect of flow and strength characteristics are found. A comparative study has been carried out to highlight the effect of two different polymers on fresh and hardened properties of polymer modified concrete. Based on these results, recommendations are made in respect of its dosage, chemical characteristics and suitability.

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For the past few decades, active research has taken place in polymer modified concrete, polymer concrete and polymer impregnated concrete. Currently the same is used as popular construction materials because of comparative high performance, multi functionality and sustainability compared to conventional cement concrete. Concrete polymer composites are environment conscious and confirm to concerns of saving of natural resources, the longevity of infrastructures and the environmental protection.

Adding aqueous polymer emulsions or dispersible polymer powders in the fresh concrete mix makes polymer modification of concrete. The polymer emulsion is stabilized by surfactants, and each polymer has its own film forming properties within the applicable temperature range and the physico-chemical conditions during hardening and curing. The surfactants and the low film forming ability of most emulsions are generally hindering the building of highly performing and durable microstructures in the PCC.

The process allows building up of composite polymer cement microstructures on a nano- scale, which can avoid the negative influences of the polymer admixtures cement interactions on the shape and distribution of the cement hydrate crystals, and on the transition zones between cementitious binder matrix and aggregates. This modified cement concrete contains two types of binder: the system based on hydraulic cement and the polymer system. An interpenetrating network of polymer and cement hydrates is generated in which the aggregates are embedded. Polymer modification is a frequently used technique to overcome some of the shortcomings of conventional concretes such as poor tensile and impact strength limited resistance to corrosion, poor behavior under severe conditions and poor adhesion of fresh mortar or concrete to old concrete. Some polymers are soluble in water and their low solubility causes difficulties in respect to the application concrete modifier. For water soluble polymers, one of the major advantages is the absence of surfactants to keep the polymers in solution. The polymer molecules are supplied on a molecular scale, improving the approach of the relative large cement grains (up till 80 μm) by the polymers. In the absence of surface active agents, the film formation on the hydrate crystals may proceed more easily and uniformly and the material properties can be better tuned and modeled.

There are various classes of water-soluble polymers that can be used for the modification of cement mortars and concrete. The first class consists of non-ionic polymers with an oxygen or nitrogen in the backbone of the polymer. Examples are polyethylene oxide (PEO) and polyethylene imine (PEI). These polymers can be synthesized with molecular weights up to the millions. Secondly, there are water soluble non-ionic polymers containing an acrylic group, e.g. polyacrylic acid (PAA) and polyacrylamide (PAAm). The water-soluble polymer polyvinyl alcohol (PVA), frequently used for the modification of concrete, belongs to the class of the water-soluble non-ionic polymers containing a vinyl group. The workability of the fresh mixture is markedly improved over that of ordinary concrete, because of plasticizing and air-entraining effects of the polymers. The modified systems show higher water retention than the ordinary systems. This may contribute to an improvement in the workability and the prevention of dry-out, and it also leads to superior adhesion to porous substrates such as ceramic tiles, mortars and concrete. In such cases, this type of polymers hardly contributes to an improvement in the strength of the modified system.

As a part of this study, a detailed literature survey is conducted and it reveals that, byvarying the nature and concentration of polymer materials, concrete property can be varied across a wide range that makes polymer modified concrete versatile in its applications. Then, the results of the primary tests conducted in the laboratory reported that the use of PMC is rich in specific applications. However, with the increasing demand being made on concrete technology to serve the needs of society, experts are responding positively by proposing new formulations using other materials. Hence it is understood that, incorporating polymer materials into the concrete has, to some extent, contributed to this demand.

In this paper presents a comparative performance of two different polymers on conventional concrete. The selected polymers are from two different groups. The modification is brought by adding different dosages of polymers (by cement) to the conventional concrete. The behaviour of concrete is studied with respect to its mechanical and structural

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properties by varying the two polymer dosages. The optimum dosage of the individual polymer is found from the experimental details. Finally recommendations are made based on the experimental investigations.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Polymers with different kinds of fillers are used as construction materials. They have good binding properties and good adhesion with aggregates. They have long-chain structure, which helps in developing long-range network structure of bonding. In contrast, cement materials provide short-range structure of bonding. As a result, polymer materials usually provide superior compressive, tensile and flexural strength to the concrete compared to Portland cement. Some polymer materials may provide good adhesion to other materials as well as resistance to physical damage (abrasion, erosion, and impact) and chemical attack. The choice of polymer mainly depends on the application.

Conventional concrete materials combined with polymers could yield composites with excellent mechanical and physical properties. Polymer materials with wide variations in properties could provide complex properties to polymer-modified concretes, and thus, present an opportunity to design structural materials with tailored properties.

Mandel and Said (Mandel, 1990)¹, conducted research on the effect of an acrylic polymer on the mechanical properties of mortar and found that the mechanical properties of mortar and the adhesion between mortar and a steel fiber improved with the addition of an acrylic polymer into the system.

Kim et al. (Kim, 1995)², studied the properties of polyvinyl alcohol (PVA) modified mortar and concrete with up to 2% polymer by weight based on cement and compared the structure and properties of polymer-modified concrete with those without polyvinyl alcohol. The interfacial transition zone and fractured surface were examined with both polarizing optical microscopy and scanning electron microscopy. They concluded that poly vinyl alcohol modified mortar showed slower absorption of water as compared to the unmodified mortar, which was an indication of lower permeability of the polymer modified mortar.

Muthukumar and Mohan (Muthukumar, 2005)⁴, studied the mechanical properties and chemical resistance of Furan-based polymer concretes and concluded that they were cost-effective materials for construction in civil engineering applications.

Aggarwal et al. (Aggarwal, 2007)³, studied the properties of polymer-modified mortars using epoxy and acrylic emulsion, and found that these materials had superior strength properties and better resistance to the penetration of chloride ions and carbon dioxide than PMCs based on vinyl acetate, copolymers of vinyl acetate-ethylene, styrene-butadiene, styrene-acrylic, and acrylic-styrene-butadiene rubber emulsions.

Ohama et al. (Ohama, 1994)⁶, investigated the effect of the monomer ratio on the typical properties of polymer-modified mortars with styrene-butyl acrylate latexes. They found that the properties (pore-size distribution, flexural and compressive strengths, water absorption, and drying shrinkage) were affected largely by both monomer ratio and polymer-cement ratio.

Hence in this study an attempt is made to compare the effect of different polymer dosages on mechanical and structural properties of concrete in fresh and hardened state. Based on the experimental results, the optimum dosages are also reported.

III. DIFFERENT POLYMERS AND ITS MECHANISM

Concrete has high compressive strength but is relatively weak in tension and adhesion, and its porosity can lead to physical and chemical deterioration. Polymers, on the other hand, are weaker in compression but can have higher tensile capacities, and provide good adhesion to other materials as well as resistance to physical (i.e., abrasion, erosion,

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impact) and chemical attack. Combinations of these two materials can exploit the useful properties of both and yield composites with excellent strength and durability properties.

The combination of Portland cement concrete or mortar with polymers can result in extremely durable, tough, and strong building material composites those are economical and kind to the environment. Structures in extreme environments, or inaccessible for repairs, or subject to impact, cyclic, or dynamic loading may all benefit from the use of PMC. The aging infrastructure can be repaired using PMC.

It is seen that the incorporation of polymers in various forms can significantly improve these shortcomings along with the increased adhesion to steel and / or old concrete, corrosion prevention, impermeability, etc. Polymers in concrete are subdivided in the following three categories.

1. Polymer impregnated concrete (PIC)
2. Polymer concrete (PC)
3. Polymer Portland cement concrete (PPCC)

In this paper an attempt is made to discuss mainly the mechanism, use and the applications of PPCC which is gaining overall popularity because of its ease of handling, inexpensive cost, efficiency and satisfactory results. However, it would be appropriate to discuss in brief PC and PIC. The section criteria of two types of polymers systems of modifying concrete were governed by their viscosity. The two polymers used here are Latex Polymer and Styrene Acrylic Polymer.

Table 1: Physical Properties of Latex Polymer

Property	Range
Solids	68% - 69%
Viscosity	1300 to 1500 Centipoises
pH	9.00 to 10.00
Weight / Gallon	8.8 lbs
Appearance	Milky White Liquid
Particle Size Avg	Less than 0.5 microns

3.1 Mechanism involved

Polymerization is a process of reacting monomer molecules together in a chemical reaction to form linear chains or a three-dimensional network of polymer chains. There are many forms of polymerization and different systems exist to categorize them.

Generally, polymers are added to the fresh mixture as an aqueous dispersion. Polymers dispersions consist of very small polymer particles (0.05 - 5 μm), dispersed in water, and are generally formed by emulsion polymerization.

The surfactants are not only added to allow emulsification during the production process of the dispersion but also to preserve stability of the dispersion until coalescence of the polymer particles in the material takes place. Afterwards, the surfactants badly influence the hydration reactions of the cement, the quality of the formed hydrates and the polymer film formation.

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Table 2: Physical Properties of Styrene Acrylic

Property	Range
Solids	44% - 46%
Viscosity	50 to 400 Centipoises
pH	9.00 to 10.00
Weight / Gallon	9.3 lbs
Appearance	Milky White Liquid
Particle Size Avg	Less than 0.2 microns

The favorable properties of the presence of the polymer at the interface between aggregates and binder can be counteracted by additional air entrainment due to the presence of the surfactants. The properties of the fresh mixture are influenced to a large extent by the surfactants, present at the surface of the polymer particles.

The cement particles are better dispersed in the mixture and a more homogeneous material is formed. In most cases, a better workability of the fresh mixture and a lower mixing water requirement is noticed. The hydration of the cement particles is also influenced by the presence of the surfactants. The surfactants hold the water, needed for hydration, more thoroughly than in the case of the unmodified mixtures. The water is partly bound to the hydrophilic part of the surfactants by hydrogen bonds. The release of water takes time, so hydration is retarded.

Additionally, at places where the polymer film starts to develop, the cement hydrates may be partly or completely covered by the polymer film and hydration may be stopped temporarily or completely.

So, in the modified mortar or concrete, the presence of surfactants can lead to an excessive air entrainment, improved workability reduced bleeding, retention of the water and retarded cement hydration. In this respect, nonionic surfactants or high polymer protective colloids are preferable to anionic or cationic surfactants to stabilize the dispersion if used in combination with cement.

The workability of the fresh mixture is markedly improved over that of ordinary cement mortar and concrete, because of plasticizing and air-entraining effects of the polymers. The modified systems show higher water retention than the ordinary cement systems. This may contribute to an improvement in the workability and the prevention of dry-out, and it also leads to superior adhesion to porous substrates such as ceramic tiles, mortars and concrete.

IV. MECHANISM OF WORKING

In our Project we will use Orthophthalic polyester resin to Replace Cement. Orthophthalic Polyester resins are the most widely used resin systems, particularly in the marine industry. By far the majority of dinghies, yachts and workboats built in composites make use of this resin system.

Polyester resins such as these are of the 'unsaturated' type. Unsaturated polyester resin is a thermoset, capable of being cured from a liquid or solid state when subject to the right conditions. It is usual to refer to unsaturated polyester resins as 'polyester resins', or simply as 'polyesters'. There is a whole range of polyesters made from different acids, glycols and monomers, all having varying properties.

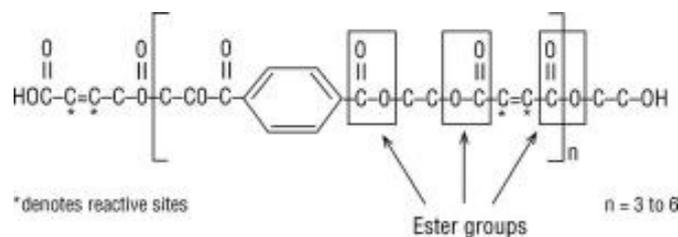
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There are two principle types of polyester resin used as standard laminating systems in the composites industry. Orthophthalic polyester resin is the standard economic resin used by many people. Isophthalic polyester resin is now becoming the preferred material in industries such as marine where its superior water resistance is desirable. The figure below shows the idealized chemical structure of a typical polyester. Note the positions of the ester groups (CO - O - C) and the reactive sites (C* = C*) within the molecular chain.



Most polyester resins are viscous, pale coloured liquids consisting of a solution of a polyester in a monomer which is usually styrene. The addition of styrene in amounts of up to 50% helps to make the resin easier to handle by reducing its viscosity.

The styrene also performs the vital function of enabling the resin to cure from a liquid to a solid by 'cross-linking' the molecular chains of the polyester, without the evolution of any by-products.

These resins can therefore be moulded without the use of pressure and are called 'contact' or 'low pressure' resins. Polyester resins have a limited storage life as they will set or 'gel' on their own over a long period of time. Often small quantities of inhibitor are added during the resin manufacture to slow this gelling action.

For use in moulding, a polyester resin requires the addition of several ancillary products. These products are generally:

IV. EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

Mix Design :-

1. Ratio of CA:FA

Coarse Aggregate 20mm (60%) And 10mm (40%)	Fine Aggregate Crush sand
1	0.75

2. Filler Material
Fly Ash :-
20% of Total aggregate volume

3. Polymer
Orthophthalic polyester resin :-
 - I. 8% of Total Volume
 - II. 10% of Total Volume
 - III. 12% of Total Volume

4. Admixtures
 - I. MEKP (Accelerator):- 1% of Total Volume of polymer
 - II. COBALT (Hardener):- 1% of Total Volume of polymer

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TESTS

1. Compression Test

The compressive strength was obtained on cubes of 150 x 150mm x 150 mm size according to IS: 516-1959. Specimens were demolded 1 day after casting and then cured in open air until testing was carried out at 1 , 3 and 7 days' age. Three specimens of each mixture were tested and the mean value was reported.

2. Split Tensile Test

The splitting tensile strength of polymer concrete is determined at 1 ,3 and 7 days on cylinders measuring 150-mm diameter and 300-mm height, these are cured in air until the date of test according the IS:5816-1999. Three specimens of each mixture were tested and the mean value was reported. The results shown the similar trend as that of above, tending increase in tensile strength values as the polymer dosage increases later it slows down.

3. Flexure Test

The flexural strength was determined at 7 days on beams of size 150 x 150 x 700 mm are cured in air until the date of test according the IS:516-1959. Three specimens of each mixture were tested and the mean value was reported. The performance of the polymer concrete increases as the polymer dosage increases from 8% to 12%

IV.RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. COMPRESSION STRENGTH

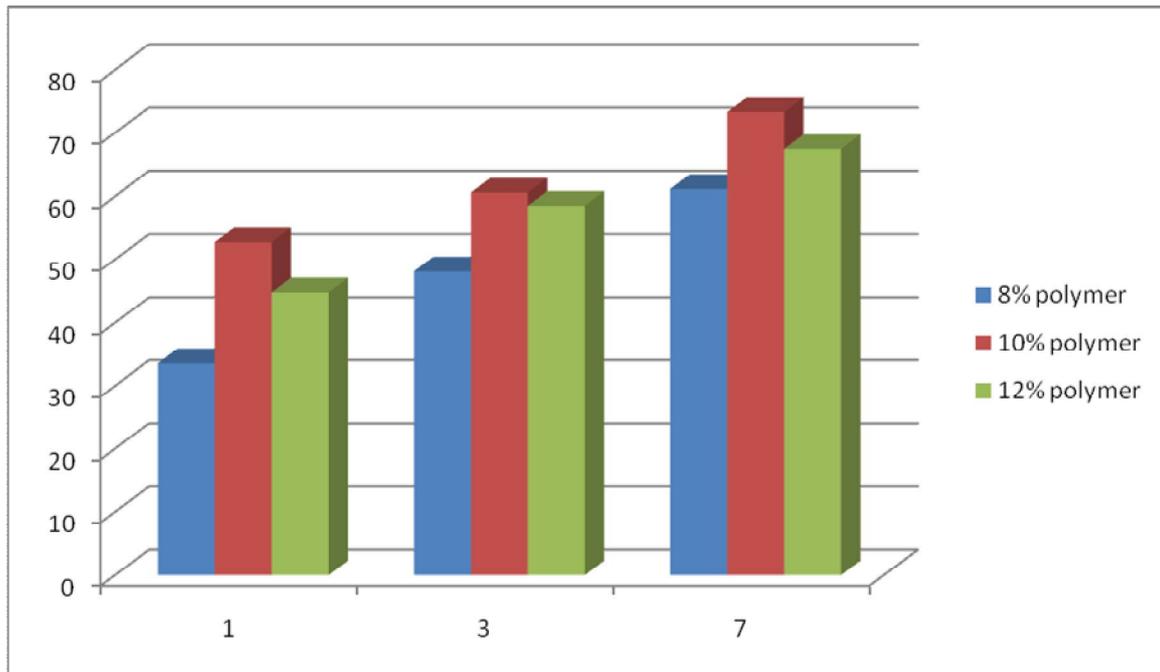
Age in Days	Compressive strength in (N/mm ²)		
	8% polymer	10% polymer	12% polymer
1	33.53	52.77	44.81
3	48.12	60.60	58.53
7	61.17	73.32	67.42

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Compressive strength of conventional concrete in 28 days is achieved in 1day by polymer concrete. Strength of polymer concrete is doubled in 7 days.

2. Flexural strength

TABLE NO 04 FLEXURAL STRENGTH

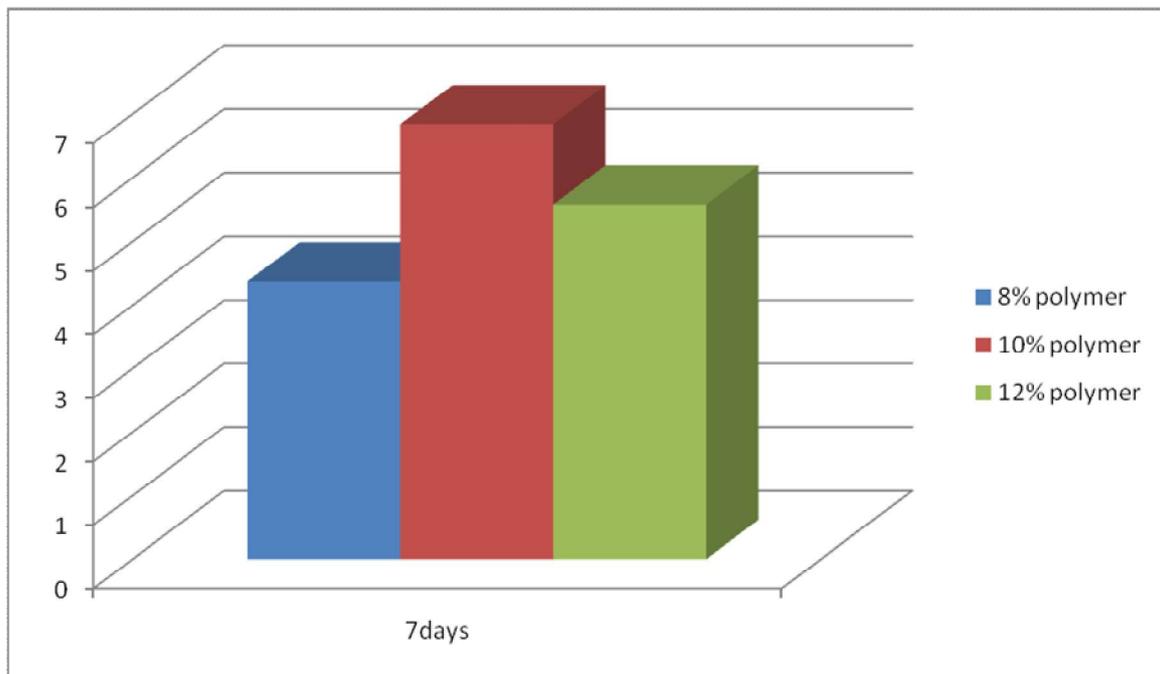
Age in DAYS	Flexural strength in (N/mm ²)		
	8% polymer	10% polymer	12% polymer
7 days	4.37	6.84	5.58

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Flexure strength of conventional concrete in 28 days is achieved in 1 day by polymer concrete.

3. Split tensile strength

TABLE NO 05 SPLIT TENSILE STRENGTH

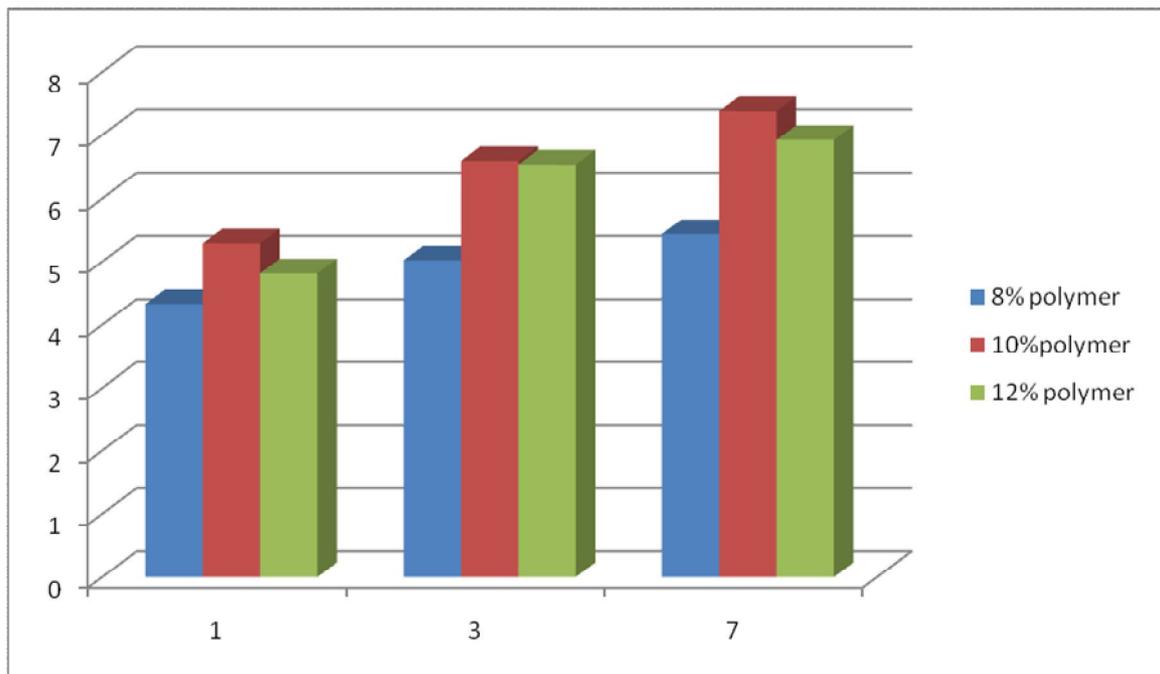
Age in Days	Split Tensile strength in (N/mm ²)		
	8% polymer	10% polymer	12% polymer
1	4.33	5.29	4.81
3	5.02	6.59	6.53
7	5.44	7.38	6.92

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Split tensile strength of conventional concrete in 28 days is achieved in 1 day by polymer concrete.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

- i. From the results it is evident that the performance and structural characteristics of polymer concrete is superior to conventional concrete. It is observed that not only in hardened state but also in its fresh state. Compressive strength results envisage that the modification at optimum dosages is well advantageous and attaining superior results in early age. A dosage of 10% polymer is observed to be the optimum dosage to achieve complete polymerization and subsequent improvement in performance.
- ii. Apparent density of Orthophthalic-based polymer concrete was about 2250 kg/m³.
- iii. The fully-developed compressive strength of Orthophthalic-based polymer concrete was about 50 MPa and 60 MPa, respectively, when sufficient crosslinking of polymer binder had been formed.

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