International Research Journal of Engineering and Technology (IRJET) e-ISSN: 2395-0056
Volume: 04 Issue: 12 | Dec-2017 www.irjet.net p-ISSN: 2395-0072

A Study on the Strength of the Bacterial Concrete Embedded with Bacillus Megaterium

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Abstract - *This paper examines the possibility of obtaining the strength of the concrete by the microbiologically induced special growth or filler. Here an attempt was made by using the bacteria "Bacillus megaterium". Concrete cylinders and prisms were cast with and without addition of bacteria were cast and its split tensile strength and flexural strength were examined. There was an increase in split tensile strength and flexural strength with addition of bacteria. From Scanning Electron Micrography analysis, it is noted that pores were partially filled up by material growth with the addition of the bacteria.*

***Key Words*: strength, bacteria, filler, bacteria, split tensile strength, flexural strength, scanning electron microscope.**

1.INTRODUCTION

Concrete is an important versatile construction material, used in wide variety of situations. The steel bars provided in concrete take over the load when the concrete cracks in tension. The concrete on the other hand protects the steel bars for attack from the environment and prevent corrosion to take place. However, the cracks in the concrete form a problem. Here the ingress of water and ions take place and deterioration of the structure starts with the corrosion of steel. To increase the durability of the structure either the cracks that are formed are repaired later or in the design phase extra reinforcement is placed in the structure to ensure that the crack width stays within certain limit.

The main objective of this research is to (1) To determine the right conditions to be created for the survival of bacteria to repair cracks. (2) To determine the tensile strength of bacterial concrete. (3) To determine the flexural strength of bacterial concrete. (4) To determine the optimum percentage of addition of bacillus megaterium.

The "Bacterial Concrete" can be made by embedding bacteria in the concrete that are able to constantly precipitate calcite. This phenomenon is called microbiologically induced calcite precipitation. A common soil bacterium, Bacillus Megaterium, was used to induce $CaCO_3$ precipitation. The basic principle for this application are that the microbial hydrolyzes urea to produce ammonia and carbon dioxide and the ammonia released in surroundings subsequently increases pH, leading to accumulation of insoluble $CaCO_3$.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

BC Delft, The Netherlands (2008), reported on application of bacteria as self-healing agent for the development of sustainable concrete. A specific group of alkali-resistant spore forming bacteria related to the genus Bacillus was selected for this purpose, a continuous decrease in pore size diameter during cement stone setting probably limited life span of spores as pore widths decreased below 1 micro metre, the typical size of Bacillus spores.

Willem De Munyck et.al (2006), reported on deposition of a layer of calcite on the surface of the specimens resulted in a decrease of capillary suction and a decrease in gas permeability.

Department of Biotechnology and environmental sciences, Thapar University (2011), reported on influence of bacteria on the compressive strength, water absorption and rapid chloride permeability. Influence of sporoscarcina pasteurii bacteria on the compressive strength and rapid chloride permeability of concrete. Concrete cubes were prepared with different concentration of S.pasteurii. The cel concentration was determined from the bacterial growth curve made by observing optical density at 600mm.

Kim Van Tittelboom (2003), reported on use of bacteria to repair cracks in concrete. The use of this biological repair technique is highly desirable because the mineral precipitation induced as a result of microbial activities is pollution free and natural. Cracked concrete samples were prepared in two different ways. Crack sealing by means of this biological treatment resulted in a decrease in water permeability.

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3. MATERIALS USED

3.1 Cement

Cement is very often the most important ingredient in concrete because it is usually the most delicate link in the chain. The function of cement is not only to bind the sand but also to fill up the voids in between sand and any coarse grained particles to form a compact mass. For the present investigation, "Shree Jaya Jothi" (brand name) 53 grade OPC confirming to BIS: 12269-1987 was used. The cement sample was dried, powdered and freed from lumps.

3.2 Coarse Aggregate

The coarse aggregate is the strongest and the least porous component of concrete. It is also a chemically stable material. By restricting the maximum size of aggregate and also by making s, the cement concrete becomes more homogenethe transition zone stronger by usage of mineral admixtureous and there is a marked enhancement in the strength properties as well as durability characteristics of concrete. Blue granite crushed stone for single sized aggregates of nominal sizes 12.5 mm confirming to IS-383:1970 were used as the coarse aggregates for this investigation. The specific gravity of 2.74, with water absorption of 3.4%, fineness modulus of 6.35 and bulk density of 1850 kg/m^3 is selected in this investigation.

Table -1: Particle size distribution

Sieve Size	Passing (%)
25 mm	100
20mm	100
16mm	100
12.5mm	100
10mm	33
6.3mm	3
4.75mm	0

3.3 Fine Aggregate

Grading of fine aggregate as per IS: 383-1970 shows that it is on zone III and it is very important in maintaining water demand, minimizing the voids in concrete. The fine aggregate having a specific gravity of 2.68, water absorption of 1.23%, fineness modulus of 5.25 and a dry density of 1240 kg/m^3 used in this investigation.

3.4 Water

Water is the key ingredient, which when mixed with cement, forms a paste that binds the aggregate together and which stimulates hydration. Portable water confirming to the requirements of IS: 456-2000 was used for casting and curing.

3.5 Bacteria

Normally cement and water has pH value upto 12 when mixed together. Most organism die in an environment with a pH value of 10 or above. Bacillus megaterium can withstand pH value above 12, it frequently lives in water, soil, air and decomposing plant residue. It is also present at the root-soil interface and also grows without oxygen in the presence of nitrate.

Table -2: Characteristics of Bacteria

Characteristics	Bacillus Megaterium
Shape	Long rods
Size	0.6 to 0.8 micro metre
Gram Strain	Gram positive
Colony Morphology	Irregular, dry, white
Lactose	No acid, No gas
Dextrose	No acid, No gas
Sucrose	Acid and gas

3.6 Mix Proportions

The mix proportions for M25 grade of concrete calculated by IS method per m^3 is given as

Cement [kg]	Fine aggregate [kg]	Coarse aggregate [kg]	Water [litres]
518.2	755	968	197
1	1.45	1.87	0.38

Quantity of Bacteria - As per the past research by Delft University, 5 ml of bacteria solution is adequate for per litre of water for their efficient growth.

3.7 Experimental Investigations

This chapter presents the details of experimental investigations carried out on the test specimens to study the strength-related properties of the concrete containing Bacillus megaterium. The water cement ratio is reduced to 0.31 which will greatly improve the qualities of interfacial transition zone to give inherent qualities expected to be satisfied by HPC. Metakaolin partially replaced for cement in this study as mineral admixture contributes more towards the strength development and performs well in aggressive conditions.

Here, an attempt was made to study the strength development at different replacement levels at different ages with Eco-Sand and the results were compared. The strength-related properties such as compressive strength, splitting tensile strength, flexural strength were studied. Minimum three specimens were tested for each mix for each test. The entire tests were conducted as per specifications required.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Compressive Strength

For compressive strength test six cubes of size 100mm X 100mm X 100mm for each mix were cast. For each mix proportion 6 numbers of cubes were cast in which 3 numbers were cured for 7 days and the remaining was cured for 28 days. All the cubes are tested in saturation condition, after drying the surface of the specimen containing no moisture in it. For each mix proportions, three cubes are tested at 7 days, 28 days. Using compression testing machine of 2000kN capacity as per IS: 516 - 1959 code. From that the compressive strength of particular mix cube calculated by dividing the cross sectional area of cube specimen from ultimate load will give a compressive strength at failure load.

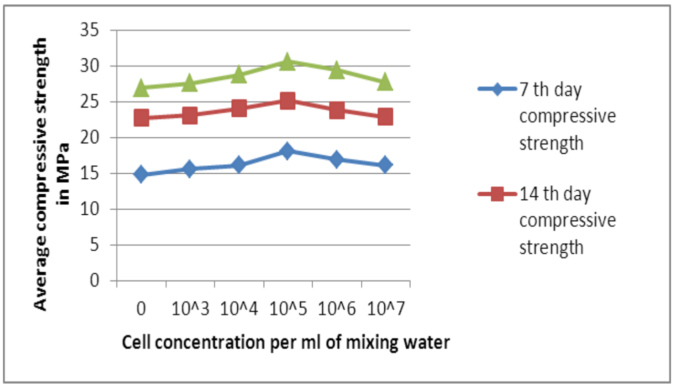

Chart -1: Cell Concentration Vs Compressive Strength

The cube compresssive strength were carried out at various ages such as 7days, 14days and 28 days. The water binder ratio of all mixes was fixed as constant value of 0.38. The compressive strength for various concentrations are given in chart 1. The experimental set up for cube compressive strength is shown in Figure.1.

Fig -1: Cube Compressive Strength – Experimental set up

4.2 Split Tensile Strength

For tensile strength test six cylinder of size 100mm X 150mm for each mix were cast. Cast iron steel mould was used for casting of these cylinders. For each mix proportion 3 numbers of cylinders were cast and cured for 28 days. Split tensile strength test are carried out at the age of 28 days using compression testing machine of 2000kN capacity as per IS 516 - 1959. To avoid direct loading on the cylinder specimen, the wooden strip are kept in between loading portion and cylinder surface. The loading is continued till the specimen splitting an dial readings are noted as shown in figure 2.

$$F_t = \frac{2P}{\pi DL}$$

Where,
Ft- Split tensile strength of concrete in MPa
P - Failure load in kN
D- Diameter of cylinder (100mm)
L - Length of cylinder (150mm)

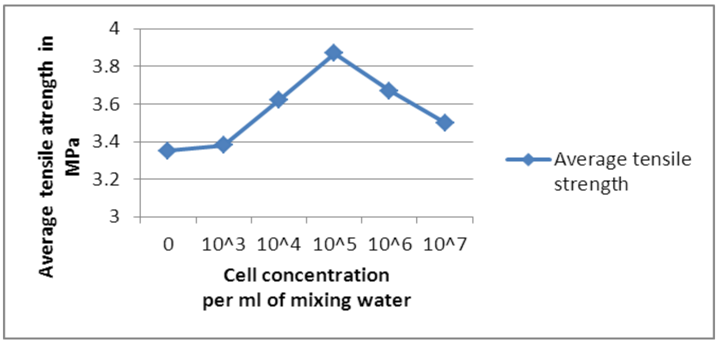

Chart -2: Cell Concentration Vs Tensile Strength

The split tensile strength results at 28 days were carried out. For each mix propotion an average of three cylinders were cast and tested at 28 days. The water binder ratio of all mixes was fixed as constant value of 0.38. The split tensile strength for various concentrations are given in chart 2.

Fig -2: Split tensile Strength – Experimental set up

In this present study, totally seven mix proportions are made and for each mix proportions three specimens are cast. Totally 21 specimens are cast including control beam specimens. The size of the beam is fixed as 100mm X 150mm X 1000mm. The reinforcement details were adopted according to IS 456 - 2000.

For a rectangular sample under a load in a two-point bending setup where the loading span is one-third of the support span. Flexural strength is calculated based on following relationship

$$\sigma = \frac{FL}{bd^2}$$

L is the length of the support (outer) span
Where, b is width of the beam
d is thickness of the beam.
F is the load (force) at the fracture point

The flexural strength results at 28 days were carried out. For each mix propotion an average of three cylinders were cast and tested at 28 days. The water binder ratio of all mixes was fixed as constant value of 0.45. The flextural strength for various concentrations are shown in Chart 3.

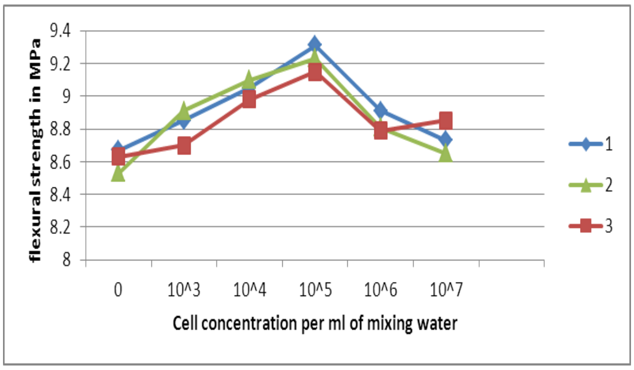

Chart -3: Cell Concentration Vs Flexural Strength

4. CONCLUSION

Bacillus megaterium can be produced from lab which is proved to be a safe and cost effective. The compressive strength of concrete cube is maximum with the addition of bacillus megaterium bacteria for a cell concentration of 105 cells per ml of mixing water. The addition of bacillus megaterium bacteria increases the compressive strength of concrete. In standard grade concrete the compressive strength is increased up to 10.92% at 28 days by addition of bacillus magaterium bacteria when compared to conventional concrete. The addition of bascillus megaterium bacteria showed significant improvement in the split tensile strength and flextural strength than the conventional concrete. From the above it can concluded that bacillus megaterium can be easily cultured and safely used in improving the strength charecteristics of concrete.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors gratefully acknowledge the support of Structural Engineering Laboratory Technicians and usage of DST-FIST sponsored UTM Machine of 3000 kN Capacity.

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