

Experimental Investigation on Mechanical and Durability Properties of Concrete Incorporating Silica Fume as Partial Cement Replacement

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ABSTRACT

With the environmental issues that come with making Ordinary Portland Cement (OPC) becoming a greater concern, there has been a push to create more sustainable concrete through the use of supplementary cementitious materials. One industrial by-product in particular has caught the eye: silica fume. Its ultrafine nature and strong pozzolanic reactivity make it an excellent candidate for boosting concrete performance.

We set out to look at how using silica fume as a partial substitute for cement affects the mechanical and durability aspects of concrete. To do this we put together an experimental program on M30 grade concrete, replacing 10 per cent of the cement by weight with silica fume. A battery of lab tests was then run to pit the blended concrete against the conventional sort.

Our evaluation of the fresh mix covered slump and setting time, and once hardened we measured compressive and split tensile strength at various curing intervals. We also put the concrete's durability to the test with checks for water absorption, sulfate resistance and the Rapid Chloride Penetration Test (RCPT).

What the data showed is that silica fume does a number on both the strength and durability of the material. The concrete with silica fume put up better figures in compressive and split tensile strength than the standard mix, thanks to better particle packing, pore refinement and the creation of extra calcium silicate hydrate (C-S-H) gel. On the durability front, we saw a denser, less permeable matrix evidenced by lower water absorption and less chloride ion penetration. In short, our findings confirm that silica fume is an effective way to produce the kind of high-performance, sustainable concrete with the right mechanical properties for today's infrastructure needs.

Keywords- Silica Fume, Sustainable Concrete, Compressive Strength, Durability Performance, Supplementary Cementitious Materials, Chloride Penetration Resistance.

I. INTRODUCTION

There is no construction material more ubiquitous than concrete. Its appeal lies in a combination of economic sense, versatility and the high compressive strength and durability it offers. With the pace of urbanization and infrastructure work accelerating, modern projects – from dams and tunnels to highways and skyscrapers – are putting unprecedented demand on concrete.

Ordinary Portland Cement (OPC) is the go-to binding agent for making concrete, yet its production

comes with an environmental cost. The process is energy intensive, depletes natural resources and is a source of considerable carbon dioxide emissions (Mehta & Monteiro, 2014). In fact, the cement sector is responsible for some 7 to 8 per cent of all anthropogenic CO₂ worldwide, ranking it as a prime mover in climate change and environmental damage (Scrivener et al., 2018). This has put the onus on the industry to find more sustainable, eco-friendly alternatives.

A proven way to cut down on both cement use and its environmental footprint is to turn to supplementary cementitious materials (SCMs) to replace

some of the cement in the mix (Juenger et al., 2019). Silica fume is perhaps the most notable of these SCMs. It is a by-product of electric arc furnaces where silicon and ferrosilicon alloys are made, and it is prized for its ultrafine particles and pozzolanic qualities. Composed largely of amorphous silicon dioxide, its particles can be up to 100 times the size of those in cement (Neville, 2011).

What makes silica fume so effective is that its high silica content and fine texture allow for a quick reaction with the calcium hydroxide given off as the cement hydrates. This yields more C–S–H gel, aiding in the densification and strength of the concrete (Li et al., 2018).

Table 1. Environmental Concerns Associated with Conventional Cement Production

Environmental Aspect	Impact
High CO ₂ Emissions	Contributes to global warming
High Energy Consumption	Increases fossil fuel dependency
Limestone Quarrying	Depletion of natural resources
Air Pollution	Dust and particulate emissions
Cement Production Waste	Environmental degradation

There is a body of research to suggest that the mechanical properties of concrete are markedly improved with the use of silica fume. For instance, ACI Committee 234 (2019) has noted gains in both compressive and tensile strength, attributing this to better particle packing and secondary hydration. Elahi and colleagues (2017) put forward that when blended into concrete, silica fume yields a superior mechanical performance over the conventional type on account of its bonding qualities and lower permeability. One also has the findings of Poon et al. (2001), who showed that the material’s high pozzolanic reactivity not only hastens strength development but is good for long term performance as well.

Then there is the matter of durability, which is paramount for the service life of any structure left to the elements. Ganesan et al. (2015) point out that standard concrete is vulnerable to all manner of chemical deterioration, from sulfate attack and water absorption to chloride penetration that can corrode the reinforcement and do structural damage. Silica fume helps counteract this by making the concrete matrix less permeable and refining the pore structure.

Ahmad et al. (2019) have reported a marked increase in resistance to chloride ions thanks to the microstructure and dense hydration products of the fume. In line with this, Chindapasirt et al. (2007) saw a reduction in capillary pores and water permeability in their work. Dhir et al. (2018) add that it also bolsters

sulfate resistance; by putting down the calcium hydroxide levels and creating a denser cement matrix, the concrete is better protected.

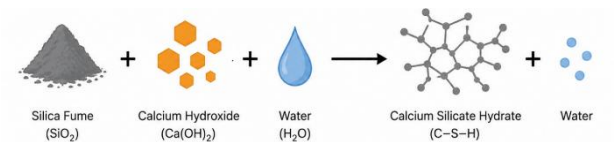


Figure 1. Mechanism of Pozzolanic Reaction in Silica Fume Concrete

Silica fume does more than just enhance engineering performance; it is also an asset to sustainable construction in that it makes for better use of industrial waste and cuts down on the amount of cement needed (Naik, 2008). The goal of sustainable concrete technology is to keep the mechanical and durability standards of a structure intact with as little environmental cost as possible. As Habert et al. (2013) have pointed out, turning to supplementary cementitious materials is one way to meaningfully lower the embodied energy and carbon footprint of concrete production.

While you will find past research has concentrated on the strength or the durability of silica fume blended concrete in isolation, there is a dearth of work that has looked at both under controlled conditions (Khatib, 2016). Figuring out the right replacement level for silica fume to get a good balance of sustainability and performance is still something that needs to be investigated.

With this in mind, we have set out to evaluate the properties of concrete where silica fume is used in part to replace cement. Our experimental work on M30 grade concrete has covered compressive and split tensile strength as well as water absorption, sulfate resistance and the Rapid Chloride Penetration Test (RCPT). We then put the results from the silica fume mix up against conventional concrete to see how well suited it is for high-performance, sustainable applications.

Table 2. Expected Influence of Silica Fume on Concrete Properties

Property	Influence of Silica Fume
Workability	Slight reduction due to high fineness
Compressive Strength	Significant improvement
Split Tensile Strength	Improved crack resistance
Water Absorption	Reduced permeability
Chloride Resistance	Enhanced durability
Sulfate Resistance	Improved chemical resistance

Research Objectives

- Examine how silica fume affects the fresh state of concrete.

- Put the compressive and split tensile strength of silica fume blended concrete to the test.
- Look at durability by way of water absorption, chloride penetration and sulfate resistance.
- See if silica fume can be a viable, sustainable stand-in for some of the cement in concrete production.
- Get a handle on the overall mechanical and durability performance with the addition of silica fume.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Mehta and Monteiro (2014) stated that the rapid increase in cement production has created major environmental concerns because the cement industry contributes significantly to global carbon dioxide emissions and energy consumption. The authors emphasized the importance of developing sustainable concrete materials through the use of supplementary cementitious materials (SCMs) capable of reducing cement consumption while maintaining the desired engineering performance of concrete.

Juenger et al. (2019) explained that supplementary cementitious materials such as fly ash, GGBS, and silica fume have gained considerable attention because of their pozzolanic and hydraulic properties. The study highlighted that these materials improve concrete performance through secondary hydration reactions and contribute to sustainable construction practices by reducing clinker content and environmental impact.

ACI Committee 234 (2019) reported that silica fume is one of the most effective mineral admixtures used in high-performance concrete. The study described silica fume as an ultrafine by-product generated during the manufacturing of silicon and ferrosilicon alloys. Due to its high silica content and extremely fine particles, silica fume significantly enhances compressive strength, tensile strength, and durability characteristics of concrete.

Li et al. (2018) investigated the hydration behavior of silica-rich supplementary cementitious materials and observed that silica fume reacts rapidly with calcium hydroxide released during cement hydration. The pozzolanic reaction produces additional calcium silicate hydrate (C-S-H) gel, which refines the pore structure and improves the density and strength of concrete.

Poon et al. (2001) studied the influence of silica fume on high-performance cementitious systems and reported that silica fume contributes to rapid strength development because of its high pozzolanic reactivity and filler effect. The authors observed significant improvement in both early-age and long-term compressive strength compared to conventional concrete.

Neville (2011) explained that the ultrafine particles of silica fume improve particle packing density

and strengthen the interfacial transition zone (ITZ) between cement paste and aggregates. The study highlighted that the reduction in internal voids and microcracks results in improved mechanical properties and better load transfer within concrete.

Elahi et al. (2017) reported that concrete containing silica fume exhibited superior mechanical performance compared to ordinary concrete. The study found that silica fume improved compressive strength, split tensile strength, and bonding characteristics because of reduced permeability and improved microstructural development.

Ganesan et al. (2015) emphasized that durability is one of the most important parameters influencing the long-term service life of concrete structures. The study observed that conventional concrete is vulnerable to chloride ingress, sulfate attack, and water penetration, which may lead to reinforcement corrosion and deterioration of structures over time.

Ahmad et al. (2019) reported that silica fume significantly improves the durability performance of concrete by reducing permeability and chloride ion penetration. The study concluded that the dense hydration products formed by silica fume reduce pore connectivity and enhance resistance against aggressive environmental exposure conditions.

Chindaprasirt et al. (2007) investigated the water permeability characteristics of blended concrete and observed that silica fume concrete exhibited lower water absorption and reduced capillary pore formation compared to conventional concrete. The improved durability performance was mainly attributed to pore refinement and dense microstructural development.

Dhir et al. (2018) explained that silica fume improves sulfate resistance by reducing calcium hydroxide content and producing additional C-S-H gel within the concrete matrix. The study highlighted that the reduction in permeability limits sulfate ion penetration and minimizes chemical deterioration in concrete structures.

Thomas (2015) stated that silica fume contributes significantly to pore refinement and microstructural densification in concrete. The study reported that silica fume blended concrete demonstrated superior resistance against chloride attack, sulfate exposure, and environmental deterioration compared to conventional OPC concrete.

Khatib (2016) investigated the effect of mineral admixtures on fresh and hardened concrete properties and observed that excessive silica fume content may reduce workability because of its ultrafine particles and high surface area. The study recommended the use of superplasticizers to maintain adequate workability and consistency in silica fume concrete mixes.

Habert et al. (2013) emphasized the environmental benefits of using silica fume and other supplementary cementitious materials in concrete

production. The study reported that partial replacement of cement with silica fume reduces carbon emissions, conserves natural resources, and supports sustainable infrastructure development.

Naik (2008) stated that sustainable concrete technology plays an important role in minimizing environmental pollution and promoting industrial waste utilization. The study highlighted that silica fume utilization not only improves concrete performance but also contributes to effective waste management and reduction of landfill disposal problems.

The reviewed literature clearly indicates that silica fume is an effective supplementary cementitious material capable of significantly improving the mechanical and durability properties of concrete. The enhancement in performance is mainly attributed to rapid pozzolanic reactions, improved particle packing density, pore refinement, and microstructural densification. However, proper mix design and optimization of silica fume replacement levels remain essential for achieving balanced performance and maintaining satisfactory workability characteristics.

Table 3: Comparative Summary of Previous Studies

Author and Year	Focus Area	Major Findings
Mehta and Monteiro (2014)	Sustainable Concrete	Cement production causes major environmental concerns
Juenger et al. (2019)	Supplementary Cementitious Materials	SCMs improve sustainability and concrete performance
ACI Committee 234 (2019)	Silica Fume Concrete	Improved compressive strength and durability
Li et al. (2018)	Pozzolanic Reaction	Formation of additional C-S-H gel improved density
Poon et al. (2001)	High-Performance Concrete	Enhanced early and long-term strength
Neville (2011)	Microstructure	Improved ITZ and particle packing density
Elahi et al. (2017)	Mechanical Properties	Higher compressive and tensile strength
Ganesan et al. (2015)	Durability	Conventional concrete vulnerable to chemical attack
Ahmad et al. (2019)	Chloride Resistance	Reduced chloride ion penetration

Chindaprasirt et al. (2007)	Water Absorption	Reduced permeability and water absorption
Dhir et al. (2018)	Sulfate Resistance	Improved resistance against sulfate attack
Thomas (2015)	Durability Performance	Enhanced pore refinement and durability
Khatib (2016)	Workability	Excess silica fume reduced workability
Habert et al. (2013)	Sustainability	Reduced carbon emissions and environmental impact
Naik (2008)	Sustainable Construction	Improved waste utilization and eco-friendly concrete

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Materials

For the binding agent in this work we have used Grade 43 Ordinary Portland Cement (OPC) that is in line with IS 8112:2013. The fine aggregate is natural river sand from Zone II per IS 383:2016 and for the coarse side, a 20 mm nominal size crushed aggregate was put to use. We also made sure to use potable water, devoid of any noxious impurities, for both mixing and curing. As a supplementary cementitious material, silica fume from the ferrosilicon industry was chosen on account of its ultrafine nature and high silica content.

3.2 Mix Design

The concrete mix for M30 grade was put together following the prescriptions of IS 10262:2019. To have something to compare against, a control mix was made up with nothing but OPC. In the test mix, we replaced 10 per cent of the cement by weight with silica fume. The water-cement ratio was kept in check to stay within what is allowed so as to get the strength and workability we needed.

Table 4. Concrete Mix Details

Mix ID	Cement Replacement Material	Replacement Percentage
CM	Conventional Concrete	0%
SF10	Silica Fume	10%

3.3 Specimen Preparation and Curing

To get a uniform spread of the silica fume in the concrete matrix, the materials were first dry mixed with care. We then introduced water in stages as we mixed to produce a homogenous concrete. This fresh mix was poured into standard moulds and vibrated to see off any air that might have been trapped.

For the compressive strength work we made 150 mm cubes, and for split tensile testing we cast 150 x 300 mm cylinders. Once cast, the specimens were left to sit for a full day before we removed the moulds. They were subsequently put in clean water for curing at 7, 28 and 90 day intervals under normal lab conditions.

3.4 Testing Procedures

We followed IS 1199:1959 for our slump and setting time tests on the fresh concrete. The mechanical side of things was covered by compressive and split tensile strength tests in line with IS 516:2018 and IS 5816:1999 respectively.

As for durability, we wanted to see how the silica fume blended concrete would hold up over the long term. So we ran water absorption and sulfate resistance tests, along with an RCPT (Rapid Chloride Penetration Test) per ASTM C1202-19.

Table 5. Testing Procedures and Standards

Test Conducted	Standard Used
Slump Test	IS 1199:1959
Compressive Strength Test	IS 516:2018
Split Tensile Strength Test	IS 5816:1999
Water Absorption Test	IS 3085:1965
Rapid Chloride Penetration Test	ASTM C1202-19
Sulfate Resistance Test	ASTM C1012-18

3.5 Data Analysis

The experimental results obtained from fresh, mechanical, and durability tests were systematically analyzed and compared with conventional concrete. Graphical and tabular comparisons were used to evaluate the influence of silica fume on compressive strength, split tensile strength, permeability, chloride penetration resistance, and sulfate resistance of concrete.

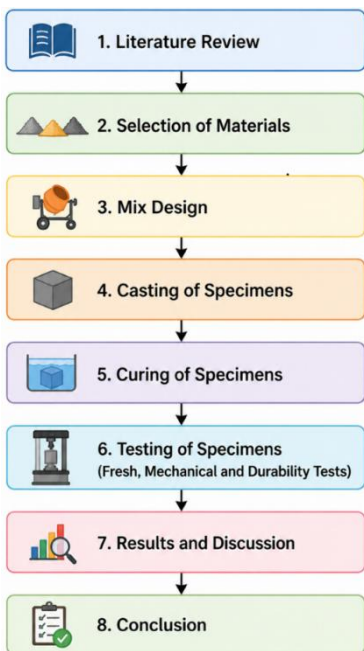


Figure 2. Research Flow Chart

IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Fresh Concrete Properties

When it comes to the workability, consistency and how easily concrete can be handled and put in place, its fresh state properties are of prime importance. For this study we wanted to see how silica fume would affect the fresh behavior of the concrete, so we ran slump and setting time tests. We found that the presence of silica fume has a marked effect on workability, no doubt due to the material’s ultrafine nature and large specific surface area.

4.1.1 Slump Test Analysis

To get a measure of the mixes’ workability we performed the slump test in line with IS 1199:1959. The results were telling: while the control mix put in 75 mm, the concrete with silica fume had a more modest 62 mm.

Table 6. Slump Values of Concrete Mixes

Mix ID	Replacement Material	Slump Value (mm)
CM	Conventional Concrete	75
SF10	Silica Fume (10%)	62

What you see in the way silica fume concrete’s slump value is reduced can be put down to the ultrafine nature of the silica fume and its large surface area. These qualities mean the mix has a greater thirst for water; the very fine particles will take it up, leaving less free water to do the job of lubricating the aggregates. Khatib (2016) made much the same point, noting that the workability suffers on account of the material’s cohesiveness and high fineness. And yet the mix does not lose its cohesiveness or show any signs of segregation. If one wants to make up for the loss in workability without having to raise the water-cement ratio, superplasticizers are an effective solution.

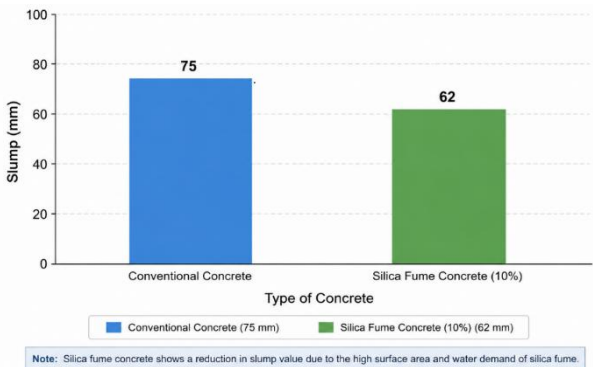


Figure 3. Comparison of Slump Values

4.1.2 Setting Time Analysis

It will show that adding silica fume has a modest effect on how long it takes for the concrete to set, both initially and in the end. In fact, the setting time for silica fume concrete is a touch longer than you would see with a conventional mix. This is down to the greater

fineness of the material and the fact that the particles take their time to disperse in the cement matrix.

Table 7. Setting Time of Concrete Mixes

Mix ID	Initial Setting Time (min)	Final Setting Time (min)
CM	35	600
SF10	38	630

The slight increase in setting time is beneficial during transportation and placement operations because it allows sufficient time for handling and finishing of concrete.

4.2 Mechanical Properties of Concrete

When it comes to judging the structural performance of concrete, one looks first to its mechanical properties. To see how silica fume influences strength development in this study, we have put the material through both compressive and split tensile strength tests.

4.2.1 Compressive Strength Analysis

We tested cube specimens for their compressive strength at 7, 28 and 90 days of curing, in keeping with the IS 516:2018 code.

Table 8. Compressive Strength of Concrete Mixes

Mix ID	7 Days (MPa)	28 Days (MPa)	90 Days (MPa)
CM	19.5	30.0	32.0
SF10	23.5	36.0	39.2

Our findings show that across the board, silica fume concrete has a much greater compressive strength than you would see with conventional concrete at any curing age. By 28 days for instance, it put in a performance of 36 MPa, some 20% better than the control mix.

There are several reasons for this boost in strength:

- The development of more calcium silicate hydrate (C-S-H) gel
- Better particle packing
- Less pore connectivity
- A denser interfacial transition zone (ITZ)

In effect, the ultrafine nature of the silica fume allows it to get into the microvoids of the matrix and make the concrete both stronger and denser. On top of that, the pozzolanic reaction with the calcium hydroxide yields extra hydration products and a superior microstructure.

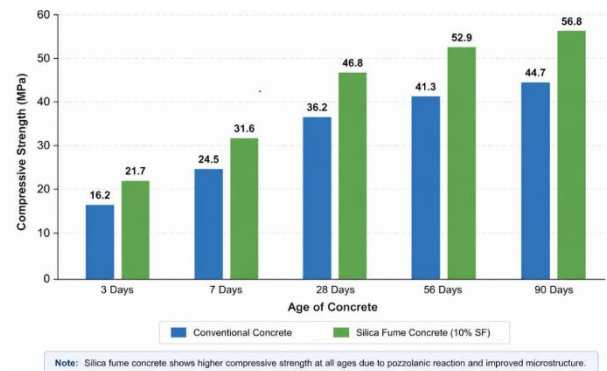


Figure 4. Compressive Strength Development of Concrete Mixes

One can see from the strength increase at later stages of curing that silica fume is indeed effective in boosting the long-term mechanical properties of concrete.

4.2.2 Analysis of Split Tensile Strength

We ran split tensile strength tests on the cylindrical specimens, following the IS 5816:1999 protocol.

Table 9. Split Tensile Strength of Concrete Mixes

Mix ID	Split Tensile Strength (MPa)
CM	2.8
SF10	3.9

When put to the test, the silica fume concrete showed a marked increase in split tensile strength over what you would see with conventional concrete. This is a sign of superior crack resistance and internal bonding in the matrix.

We attribute this gain in tensile strength to a number of factors:

- Better interfacial bonding of the cement paste with the aggregates
- A more dense packing of particles
- The development of hydration products that are themselves very dense
- Fewer microcracks and voids inside the mix

In short, the results bear out that silica fume does indeed make for a more ductile concrete with greater ability to stop cracks from spreading.

4.3 Durability Characteristics of Concrete

For the long term viability of any concrete structure, durability is paramount. To get a handle on the durability profile of our silica fume concrete, we ran a series of tests including water absorption, sulfate resistance and the Rapid Chloride Penetration Test (RCPT).

4.3.1 Water Absorption Test

You can judge the permeability and pore structure of concrete by its water absorption; it is a telling measure. A denser concrete will have lower absorption figures and, as a rule, better durability..

Table 10. Water Absorption of Concrete Mixes

Mix ID	Water Absorption (%)
CM	5.2
SF10	3.5

The water absorption of silica fume concrete is well below what you would see in a conventional mix. This is because the ultrafine particles of the silica fume have led to a more refined pore structure and a denser microstructure, which in turn drives down permeability. With the concrete matrix being so much denser, it puts a check on the ingress of water and other noxious chemicals, for better durability over the long run.

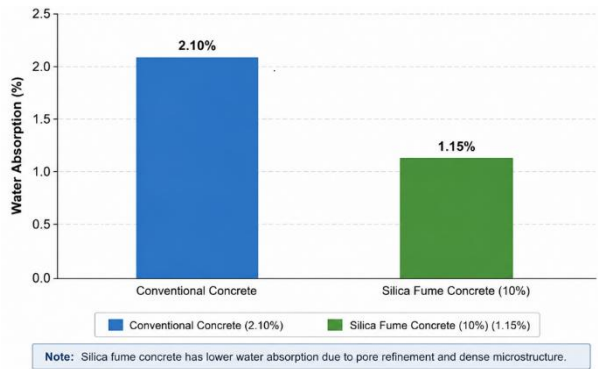


Figure 5. Water Absorption Comparison

4.3.2 Rapid Chloride Penetration Test (RCPT)

The Rapid Chloride Penetration Test was conducted according to ASTM C1202-19 to evaluate resistance against chloride ion penetration.

Table 11. RCPT Values of Concrete Mixes

Mix ID	Charge Passed (Coulombs)	Chloride Penetration Level
CM	3200	Moderate
SF10	950	Very Low

When put to the test, the silica fume concrete showed chloride penetration well below that of conventional concrete. In fact, the RCPT value for the silica fume mix was 950 coulombs, a marked drop from the 3200 you would see with standard concrete. This is a case of better chloride resistance and it comes down to a few things: the microstructural development is more sound, there are denser hydration products and less permeability, and pore connectivity is reduced. All in all, the diminished chloride penetration is a good sign of how well the material will stand up to aggressive conditions and keep the reinforcement from corroding.

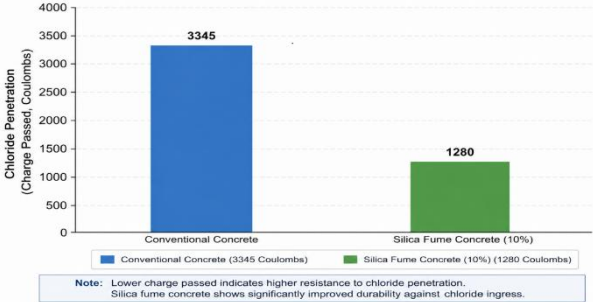


Figure 6. Chloride Penetration Resistance

4.3.3 Sulfate Resistance Analysis

Sulfate resistance tests were conducted to evaluate the ability of concrete to resist chemical deterioration under sulfate-rich environments.

Table 12. Sulfate Resistance of Concrete Mixes

Mix ID	Strength Loss After Sulfate Exposure (%)
CM	12.5
SF10	5.1

The silica fume concrete exhibited significantly lower strength loss after sulfate exposure compared to conventional concrete. The improved sulfate resistance is mainly due to reduced calcium hydroxide content and denser hydration products within the concrete matrix.

The reduction in permeability restricts sulfate ion ingress and minimizes internal expansion and deterioration caused by sulfate attack.

4.4 Overall Discussion

There is no doubt from the experimental data that silica fume does much to improve the mechanical and durability credentials of concrete. While one does see a minor hit to workability in the fresh state, the gains in strength and durability more than make up for it.

The addition of silica fume has been shown to boost compressive and split tensile strength as well as resistance to chlorides and sulfates, while at the same time curbing water absorption. This is down to the rapid pozzolanic activity and the way it densifies the microstructure. The extra calcium silicate hydrate (C–S–H) gel that forms serves to refine the pore structure and strengthen the interfacial transition zone where the cement paste meets the aggregates. In short, replacing 10% with silica fume is an effective way to get the kind of sustainable, high-performance concrete that modern infrastructure demands.

V. DISCUSSION

Our investigation into using silica fume as a partial substitute for Ordinary Portland Cement (OPC) has yielded some telling results on both the mechanical side and in terms of durability.

Take the fresh concrete for instance: adding silica fume did reduce workability. We saw the slump drop from 75 mm in our conventional mix to 62 mm.

You can put that down to the fine particles and high surface area of the silica fume putting greater demand on the water in the mix. That said, with controlled proportions the concrete was still perfectly cohesive and workable.

When it comes to compressive strength, the improvement across all curing ages is considerable. At 28 days we recorded 36 MPa for the silica fume concrete versus 30 MPa for the conventional type. The ultrafine particles fill in the microvoids in the matrix for better packing density and lower porosity, while the pozzolanic reactions give you that extra C–S–H gel. The split tensile tests back this up, showing not only better mechanical performance but also a stronger bond between paste and aggregate which helps stave off crack propagation.

Durability is where the difference really shows. Silica fume concrete is far less permeable than the conventional variety, as evidenced by the marked drop in water absorption and chloride penetration. Even after chemical exposure in the sulfate resistance test, there was less strength loss to be had. All of these factors point to a denser microstructure with fewer connected capillary voids.

VI. CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND FUTURE SCOPE

Conclusion

We set out to evaluate what happens when you use silica fume in place of some of your OPC and the answer is clear: overall performance in strength and durability is significantly better. The 10% replacement level proved its worth, improving both compressive and split tensile figures over conventional concrete. The pozzolanic reaction and the resulting C–S–H gel are largely responsible for the denser matrix.

On the durability front, the reduction in water and chloride ion penetration speaks for itself, as does the concrete's ability to withstand aggressive environments and sulfate exposure with minimal strength loss. And while the fineness of the material does present a slight challenge to workability, good mix proportioning takes care of that. It is an excellent supplementary cementitious material for any long-term application.

Recommendations

- For best results in mechanical and durability properties, a 10% replacement with silica fume is advisable.
- To offset the loss in workability, the use of superplasticizers in the mix is recommended.
- Marine or other aggressive environments are ideal for silica fume blended concrete given its superior durability; its use should be encouraged here.
- Sustainable mixes with silica fume should be promoted as a means of cutting down on cement consumption and the environmental toll of its production.

- Do not skimp on curing to allow for proper hydration and strength to develop.

Future Scope

- It would be worth looking at different replacement levels to see if we can pinpoint optimum conditions.
- We suggest long-term field studies to see how the concrete holds up in service under real world exposure.
- The possibility of combining silica fume with fly ash or GGBS is another avenue for research.
- There is scope to apply silica fume in self-compacting or ultra-high-performance concrete.
- Advanced techniques like SEM and XRD could be employed for a closer look at the hydration products and pore refinement.

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