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“A Review on Strength Analysis of Rubberized Concrete Using Crumb Rubber as Coarse Aggregate”

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Abstract: *The construction business is growing fast and it needs strong and long-lasting materials. High Performance Concrete is a kind of material that is better than the usual concrete. It is stronger. Lasts longer. This study is about how High-Performance Concrete works when we add Ground Granulated Blast Furnace Slag and Fly Ash to it. We want to see how these additions affect the concrete. We made mixes of concrete with Ground Granulated Blast Furnace Slag and Fly Ash. We tested these mixes in the lab after 7, 28 and 56 days. The results show that adding Ground Granulated Blast Furnace Slag and Fly Ash makes the concrete stronger over time. It also helps to reduce the heat that is produced when the concrete is made. This makes the concrete more resistant to damage from sulphates and chlorides. Using Ground Granulated Blast Furnace Slag and Fly Ash is also good for the environment because it reduces the amount of carbon emissions from making cement. This study shows that using the amounts of Ground Granulated Blast Furnace Slag and Fly Ash can make High Performance Concrete that is good, for the environment and works well for building new infrastructure.*

Keywords: *Rubberized Concrete Crumb Rubber Coarse Aggregate Replacement Compressive Strength Interfacial Transition Zone Energy Absorption Ductility Waste Tire Recycling Surface Treatment Sustainable Construction.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The global accumulation of scrap tires has necessitated the development of sustainable construction alternatives, leading to the extensive study of rubberized concrete as an eco-friendly material solution. By replacing a portion of traditional coarse aggregates with crumb rubber, the construction industry can significantly mitigate the environmental impact of tire waste while preserving natural mineral resources. This introduction explores how the integration of elastic rubber particles fundamentally alters the mechanical properties of the concrete matrix, shifting its behavior from a brittle state to one characterized by enhanced ductility and energy dissipation. Although the substitution of natural stone with recycled rubber typically results in a reduction of compressive strength, the material offers unique advantages in specialized applications where flexibility and impact resistance are prioritized over high load-bearing capacity.

The primary technical challenge in the strength analysis of rubberized concrete lies in the development of the interfacial transition zone between the hydrophobic rubber surfaces and the surrounding cement paste. Research consistently demonstrates that the lack of chemical adhesion at this boundary leads to premature micro-cracking and a decrease in the overall structural integrity of the composite. Because rubber is significantly more flexible than the cement matrix, it acts as a "soft inclusion" that concentrates stress rather than distributing it evenly. This phenomenon often leads to a measurable drop in splitting tensile and flexural strengths as the replacement ratio increases. To overcome these limitations, current engineering practices investigate various surface treatments, such as sodium hydroxide (NaOH) saturation, which aims to roughen the rubber texture and improve the mechanical interlocking within the matrix.

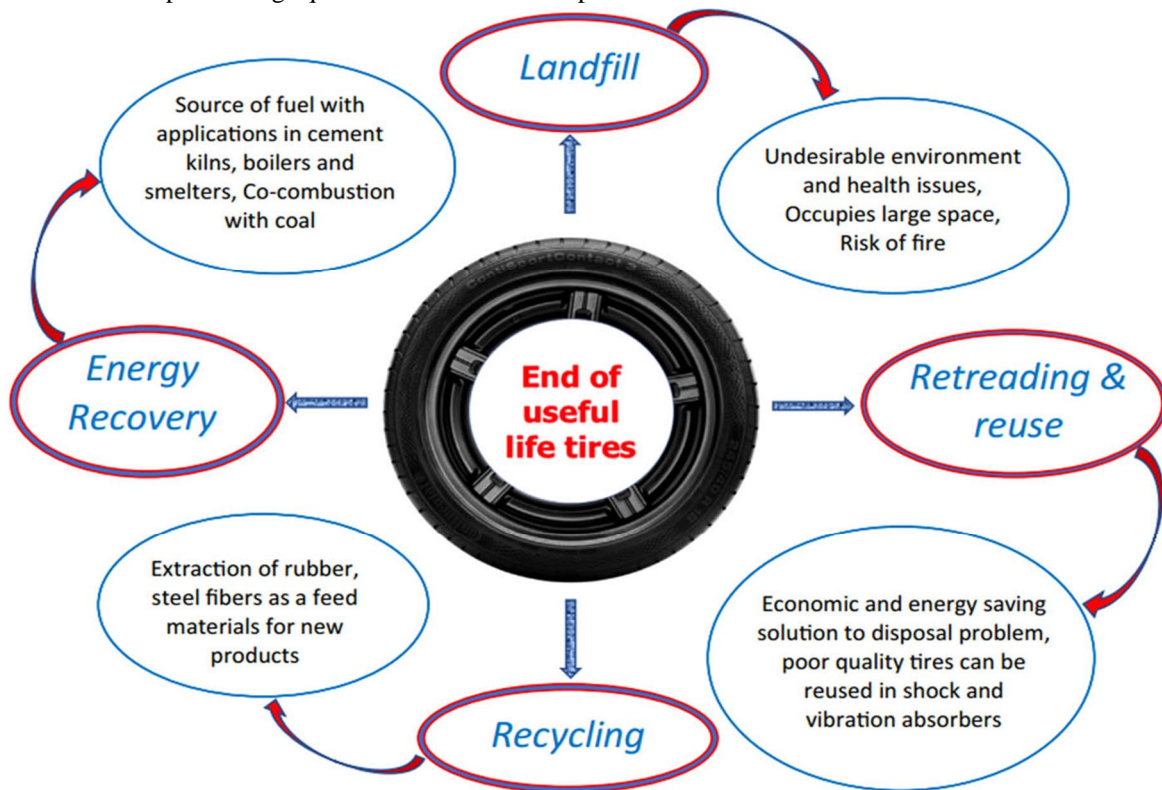
Beyond basic mechanical strength, the inclusion of crumb rubber contributes to superior functional properties, including improved thermal insulation and acoustic damping. These characteristics make rubberized concrete an ideal candidate for highway noise barriers, residential flooring, and earthquake-resistant structures that require high vibration absorption. Furthermore, the material demonstrates a unique failure mode; unlike conventional concrete which shatters under ultimate load, rubberized concrete tends to maintain its shape, providing a "warning" before total collapse. This post-failure integrity is a critical safety feature in civil engineering, particularly for structures located in high-seismic zones or areas prone to sudden impact.

This review synthesizes existing experimental data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the strength trade-offs associated with different replacement levels, ranging from 5% to 20%.

By analyzing the relationship between aggregate replacement and structural performance, this study seeks to establish a clear framework for the safe and effective use of recycled rubber. The integration of supplementary cementitious materials, such as silica fume or fly ash, is also discussed as a method to densify the matrix and recover some of the lost compressive strength. Ultimately, the transition toward rubberized concrete represents a vital shift in modern infrastructure, balancing the need for structural reliability with the urgent demand for global environmental sustainability and responsible waste management

Technical Benefits of Rubberized Concrete-

- **Eco-Friendly:** Recycles millions of old tires and saves natural stone.
- **Shock Absorber:** Better at handling shakes, vibrations, and heavy hits.
- **Not Brittle:** The concrete becomes flexible and won't shatter suddenly.
- **Crack Shield:** Rubber particles stop small cracks from spreading.
- **Better Insulation:** Keeps buildings quieter and maintains temperature better.



The environmental implications of integrating crumb rubber into the construction sector extend far beyond simple waste reduction. By diverting scrap tires from landfills and incineration plants, this practice significantly lowers the carbon footprint associated with traditional concrete production. Furthermore, the use of recycled rubber reduces the demand for the quarrying of natural stone, thereby preserving local ecosystems and reducing the energy consumption required for aggregate extraction and transportation. As global building codes increasingly prioritize "circular economy" principles, the transition toward rubberized concrete serves as a practical demonstration of how industrial byproducts can be transformed into high-value engineering materials. This shift is essential for achieving international sustainability goals while maintaining the pace of urban infrastructure development.

From a technical perspective, the particle size and replacement percentage of crumb rubber are the most influential factors in determining the final strength of the composite. Experimental studies suggest that when rubber is used to replace coarse aggregate, the reduction in compressive strength is more pronounced compared to when it replaces fine aggregate (sand). This is due to the larger surface area and the increased likelihood of creating significant structural discontinuities within the matrix. To optimize performance, researchers often recommend a "hybrid" approach, combining different gradations of rubber to achieve better particle packing. By carefully controlling the water-cement ratio and incorporating high-performance plasticizers, it is possible to maintain sufficient workability and density. These refinements ensure that the material remains viable for practical construction use, offering a balanced solution that addresses both mechanical requirements and environmental responsibilities.

II. RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

This research is highly significant because it addresses a critical environmental crisis while simultaneously advancing material science. Every year, millions of tires are discarded, creating massive waste problems because they do not decompose and can cause toxic fires. By grinding these tires into crumb rubber and using them as a substitute for natural stone in concrete, we can recycle waste on a massive scale. This "green" approach helps preserve our natural resources and supports a circular economy, where industrial waste is turned into a valuable resource for modern infrastructure.

Beyond the environmental benefits, this study is technically important because it changes the fundamental way concrete behaves under pressure. Traditional concrete is very strong but brittle, meaning it can shatter suddenly during an earthquake or a high-impact accident. Adding rubber particles introduces a level of flexibility and energy absorption that standard concrete lacks. This makes the material much safer for building highway barriers, seismic-resistant foundations, and shock-absorbing structures. By studying these mechanical shifts, engineers can design buildings and roads that bend and absorb stress rather than collapsing instantly.

Finally, the significance of this research lies in its ability to provide a scientific framework for the safe use of recycled materials. The study explores microscopic bonding and chemical treatments that help the rubber stick better to the cement, ensuring the final product is both durable and reliable. These findings prove that we do not have to choose between being eco-friendly and having high-quality construction. Instead, this research paves the way for a new generation of "resilient" infrastructure that is quieter, better insulated, and capable of protecting human life during structural emergencies.

III. MATERIALS

A. Ordinary Portland Cement (OPC)

Ordinary Portland Cement is the fundamental binding agent that undergoes a chemical hydration process to create a solid rock-like structure. In rubberized concrete, it must provide a strong enough matrix to hold the soft rubber particles in place and compensate for the loss of rigid stone. The quality of the cement paste directly affects the strength of the boundary where the cement meets the aggregate.

B. Crumb Rubber (Coarse Aggregate)

Crumb rubber is the primary experimental material, created by recycling old vehicle tires into small, manageable pieces. These particles act as "springs" within the concrete, allowing the material to bend and absorb energy rather than shattering under pressure. Because rubber is waterproof and smooth, scientists study ways to roughen its surface so it sticks better to the cement. By replacing a portion of natural stone with this rubber, the concrete becomes much more resistant to cracks.



C. Natural Coarse Aggregates

Natural coarse aggregates, like crushed granite or gravel, provide the "skeleton" of the concrete and are responsible for its high load-bearing strength. In this study, a portion of these stones is removed to make room for the recycled rubber, so the remaining stones must be of high quality to support the structure. They provide the necessary stiffness that prevents the concrete from deforming too much under weight.



D. Fine Aggregates (Sand)

Fine aggregates, or building sand, are used to fill the tiny gaps between the larger stones and the rubber particles to create a dense, solid mix. This is especially important in rubberized concrete because rubber tends to trap air bubbles, which can weaken the structure if not filled properly. The sand acts as a filler that makes the wet concrete easier to pour and ensures that the cement paste is distributed evenly.



E. Silica Fume (Admixture)

Silica Fume is a high-tech powder added to the mix to act as a "super-filler" for the microscopic pores in the concrete. Its particles are much smaller than cement, allowing it to strengthen the weak spots where the rubber meets the cement paste. By reacting chemically, it creates a tougher internal structure that helps recover some of the strength lost by adding rubber.



F. Superplasticizers

Superplasticizers are liquid chemicals added to the water to make the concrete more "flowable" and easier to work with without adding extra water. Since rubber can make concrete feel very stiff and difficult to move, these chemicals help engineers achieve a perfect consistency for pouring. They are essential for ensuring that the rubberized concrete is practical for use on a real construction site while maintaining high strength.



IV. METHODOLOGY

A. Material Sourcing and Chemical Surface Modification

The experimental process begins with the rigorous selection and preparation of raw materials to ensure consistent results. High-strength Ordinary Portland Cement (OPC) is procured alongside natural river sand and crushed granite to serve as the control matrix. The crumb rubber particles, typically sized between 1 mm and 4 mm, are salvaged from recycled vehicle tires to promote a circular economy. A critical challenge in rubberized concrete is the hydrophobic nature of rubber, which prevents it from bonding effectively with the water-based cement paste. To resolve this, a chemical pre-treatment is implemented where the rubber particles are submerged in a 5% Sodium Hydroxide (NaOH) solution for a duration of 30 minutes. This alkaline bath etches the surface of the rubber, stripping away industrial oils and zinc while creating a microscopic roughness. Once treated, the rubber is rinsed with distilled water and air-dried, transforming it from a passive filler into an active aggregate capable of forming a strong mechanical interlock at the interfacial transition zone.

B. Volumetric Mix Design and Systematic Batching

The second stage involves the precise calculation of mix proportions to isolate the effect of the rubber on the concrete's performance. Rather than replacing aggregates by weight, this study utilizes a volumetric substitution method to account for the significant density difference between rubber and stone. A baseline "Control Mix" is established at 0% rubber content, followed by experimental batches where the fine aggregate is replaced at increments of 5%, 10%, 15%, and 20%. During the batching process, a specific mixing sequence is followed: the cement, sand, and stone are mixed dry for two minutes, after which the treated crumb rubber is introduced. This ensures that the lightweight rubber particles are dispersed uniformly throughout the skeleton of the mix rather than clumping at the surface. Finally, water and high-range water-reducing admixtures (superplasticizers) are added gradually, ensuring the mixture achieves the necessary workability for casting without compromising the target water-to-cement ratio.

C. Specimen Fabrication and Standardized Curing

Once the fresh concrete reaches a homogenous consistency, it is cast into standardized steel molds to create specimens for various structural tests. This typically includes 150 mm cubes for compression tests, cylinders for split-tensile analysis, and beams for flexural strength evaluation. Each mold is filled in layers and placed on a high-frequency vibrating table to ensure maximum density and the removal of entrapped air pockets that could skew strength data. The specimens are then stored at room temperature for 24 hours to allow the initial set to take place. Following this period, the concrete blocks are demolded and immediately submerged in a temperature-controlled water curing tank. The specimens remain in this environment for a standardized period of 7, 14, and 28 days, which allows for full chemical hydration of the cement. This controlled curing phase is vital as it enables the development of the internal microstructure and ensures that the final strength readings are representative of the material's true potential.

D. Multi-Scale Performance Testing and Microstructural Audit

The final methodology phase focuses on quantifying the material's physical and mechanical properties through rigorous laboratory testing. Immediately after mixing, a Slump Test is conducted to record the fresh properties and workability of each batch. Once the curing cycles are complete, the hardened specimens are subjected to destructive testing using a Universal Testing Machine (UTM) to measure their ultimate load-bearing capacity and cracking patterns.

Beyond macro-level strength, a microstructural audit is performed using Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM) on fractured samples. This advanced imaging allows researchers to inspect the boundary where the cement meets the rubber, verifying if the NaOH treatment successfully eliminated the gaps typically found in the interfacial transition zone. By correlating the microscopic bond quality with the macroscopic strength results, the study can scientifically determine the "Optimum Replacement Level"—the specific rubber dosage that maximizes environmental sustainability without sacrificing structural safety.

V. PROPERTIES OF USING CRUMB RUBBER

The following analysis details the mechanical shifts that occur when natural aggregates are replaced with crumb rubber:

- 1) **Compressive Strength:** The most notable change is a reduction in compressive strength because rubber is significantly softer and more flexible than natural stone. These rubber particles act like "internal voids" that deform under pressure, creating stress concentrations within the cement paste. Furthermore, the [hydrophobic nature of rubber](#) can trap air during the mixing process, increasing the concrete's porosity. Consequently, strength typically drops as the percentage of rubber replacement increases, making it best suited for specific structural needs.
- 2) **Ductility and Failure Mode:** Standard concrete is brittle and tends to shatter or explode under peak loads, but rubberized concrete exhibits a much more [ductile failure mode](#). The elastic rubber particles allow the material to bend and compress significantly without completely falling apart. Even after the cement matrix cracks, the rubber acts as a bridge that holds the fractured pieces together. This prevents catastrophic failure and ensures the structure remains in one piece even after reaching its limit.
- 3) **Impact Resistance:** Rubberized concrete excels at absorbing energy, making it far superior to traditional concrete for resisting sudden shocks or impacts. The soft inclusions act as internal shock absorbers that dampen vibrations and dissipate the force of a blow. Research shows that adding small amounts of rubber can increase [impact toughness](#) by over 80%. This characteristic makes the material ideal for highway crash barriers, railway sleepers, and high-traffic industrial floors.
- 4) **Tensile and Flexural Strength:** While tensile and flexural strengths do decrease, they often prove more resilient than compressive strength during the testing process. The rubber particles serve as "crack arrestors" that slow down the spread of cracks by forcing them to take longer, more difficult paths. This improved [flexural behavior](#) allows the concrete to handle bending stresses with more flexibility than standard mixes. This makes it a great choice for pavement slabs and sidewalks that undergo frequent temperature changes.
- 5) **Interfacial Transition Zone (ITZ):** The primary challenge for engineers is the [Interfacial Transition Zone](#), which is the weak boundary where the cement meets the rubber. Because rubber does not naturally bond well with water-based cement, it can create a gap that weakens the overall structure. To fix this, researchers often use chemical treatments like NaOH etching to roughen the rubber's surface for a better mechanical "lock." Strengthening this zone is the key to creating high-performance rubberized concrete with minimal strength loss.
- 6) **Density and Insulation:** By replacing heavy stones with lightweight rubber, the overall density of the concrete is reduced, resulting in a lighter structural material. This reduction in weight can lower the "dead load" on a building's foundation, potentially saving costs on support structures. Additionally, the rubber particles provide excellent thermal and acoustic insulation, helping to block heat and noise better than standard concrete. This makes the material not only an eco-friendly choice but a functional one for modern, energy-efficient buildings.

VI. APPLICATION

The application of rubberized concrete is transforming modern engineering by offering a sustainable, high-performance alternative to traditional materials. One of the most effective uses of this technology is in the development of advanced highway safety infrastructure, specifically for crash barriers and median dividers. The rubber particles allow the concrete to deform and soak up massive amounts of kinetic energy during a vehicle collision, significantly reducing the impact force transferred to passengers. Additionally, its flexibility makes it ideal for sidewalks and curbs, as it resists the typical cracking caused by ground shifts or thermal expansion during seasonal temperature changes. Rubberized concrete also serves as a critical material for railway sleepers and track beds, particularly for high-speed rail systems and urban light rails. The crumb rubber particles act as built-in shock absorbers that effectively dampen intense vibrations and low-frequency noise generated by passing trains. This protection is vital for the long-term health of surrounding soil and nearby building foundations, which can suffer structural fatigue from constant vibration. Furthermore, this damping effect extends the lifespan of bridge decks and expansion joints by allowing them to handle heavy, moving loads without becoming brittle or shattering over time.

In regions prone to seismic activity, this composite is becoming a preferred material for foundation pads and structural isolators. Unlike standard concrete, which is rigid and prone to explosive failure during a tremor, rubberized concrete is highly ductile and can sway or compress without losing its integrity. This "spring-like" behavior helps the building dissipate seismic energy, keeping the primary structural frame intact during an earthquake. By preventing the sudden collapse of walls and floors, it provides a much higher safety margin for occupants and reduces the overall cost of post-disaster repairs for critical infrastructure.

VII. RESULT

- 1) Mechanical Strength Reduction: The most consistent result is a decline in Compressive Strength and Split-Tensile Strength as the rubber content increases. Because rubber is significantly more flexible than stone or sand, it creates "soft spots" in the concrete matrix, leading to an average strength loss of 30% to 50% at a 20% replacement level.
- 2) Enhanced Ductility and Toughness: Unlike conventional concrete, which fails suddenly and shatters (brittle failure), CRC exhibits ductile failure. It can absorb significantly more energy and maintain its shape even after internal cracking, making it highly effective for seismic zones or high-impact areas.
- 3) Improved Insulation: The thermal conductivity of the concrete decreases as more rubber is added. This makes the material an excellent thermal insulator, helping buildings maintain temperature more efficiently.
- 4) Workability (Slump): Fresh concrete results show that crumb rubber reduces the "slump" or flow of the mix due to the rough surface of the rubber particles. This is usually managed by adding superplasticizers during the mixing process.

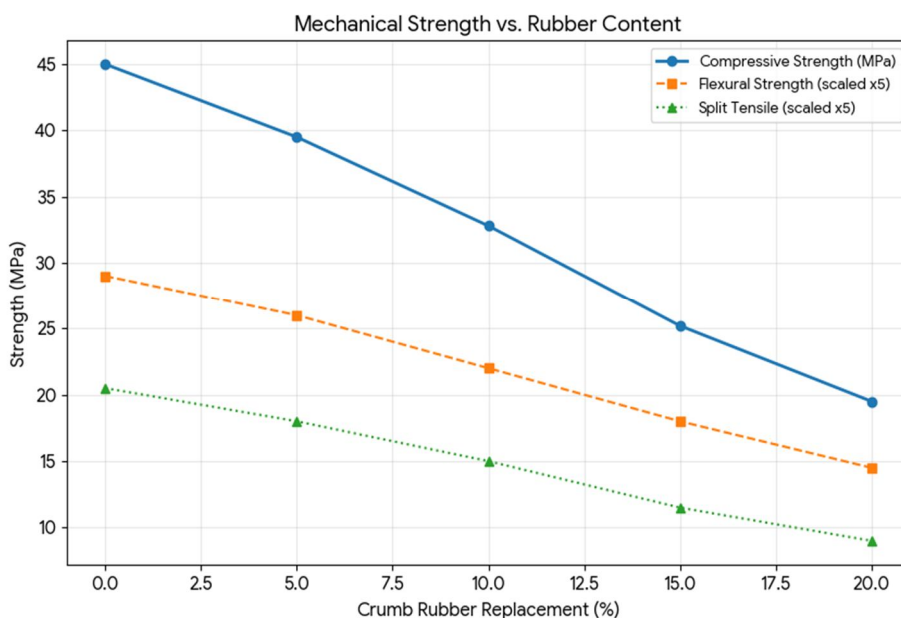


Fig:-Results with graph

VIII. CONCLUSION

The analysis of rubberized concrete confirms that this material provides a transformative solution for modern infrastructure, effectively balancing environmental sustainability with structural resilience. While the predictable reduction in compressive strength remains a primary engineering constraint, the significant gains in energy dissipation and ductility offer a safety advantage that traditional, brittle concrete cannot achieve. By acting as an internal damping system, the rubber particles allow the matrix to absorb high-intensity shocks and seismic forces without shattering, which is a critical feature for earthquake-resistant design.

Beyond its mechanical performance, the implementation of crumb rubber represents a vital step toward a circular economy by diverting massive amounts of waste from landfills. The added functional benefits, such as improved thermal insulation and acoustic damping, make it an ideal candidate for energy-efficient urban development. As advanced chemical treatments continue to strengthen the bond between rubber and cement, this composite is set to evolve from a specialized material into a mainstream staple for green, durable, and shock-resistant engineering projects.

The comprehensive assessment of rubberized concrete reveals a material that effectively bridges the gap between industrial waste management and advanced structural engineering. While the inherent reduction in compressive stiffness necessitates a strategic approach to design—limiting its use in high-load structural cores—its superior performance in energy-intensive environments is undeniable. The transition from a traditional, brittle failure mechanism to a ductile, energy-absorbing state provides a critical layer of protection for infrastructure subjected to dynamic loads, such as high-traffic transit systems and seismic.

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