



iJRASET

International Journal For Research in
Applied Science and Engineering Technology



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR RESEARCH

IN APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Volume: 8

Issue: IV

Month of publication: April 2020

DOI:

www.ijraset.com

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Improvement in the Engineering Property of Locally available Soil using Silica Fume

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Abstract: In this research paper we study the effect of adding silica fume to locally available soil in order to improve its engineering properties. Silica fume has been added in different percentages 0%, 2.5%, 5%, and 7.5% by weight of soil. The experimental investigations reveals that the addition of silica fume reduces the liquid limit, plasticity index, specific gravity, optimum moisture content, free swell % and increases plastic limit, unconfined compression strength with increasing California bearing ratio.

Keywords: Locally available Soil, Silica Fume (SF), California Bearing Ratio (CBR), Atterberg's Limit.

I. INTRODUCTION

Soil plays an important part for the base of the structure to be strong. So for good foundation we should know about the properties of the soil around it. If the soil is weak or don't have the required properties then it will produce severe damage to the structure build on it. Soil which expands always creates a problem for the lightly weighted structure because it changes volumetrically along with the seasonal moisture variation. It results in the decrement of engineering properties of the soil. Hence in order to attain the desirable amount of strength modification in the properties of the soil is needed. The present study comprises of characterization and stabilization of locally available soil with the help of silica fume waste. This waste is being dumped off in low lying areas causing dumping issues as well as hampering the fertility of the soil.

A. Materials And Properties

In this study, silica fume is used for stabilizing and considering its effects on the locally available soil.

- 1) **Soil:** The locally available soil is used in this research that is collected from MITS Campus Area, Gwalior (M.P.). Locally available soil is used as a base material in this study. It has been partially replaced by silica fume powder by weight of dry soil. The soil sample collected was disturbed. The study tells us that soil is of clayey nature having expansive behavior with high plasticity having $G_s = 2.69$ with 90% fines. Table 1 depicts the properties of collected sample of locally available soil.

Table 1. Properties of Locally available Soil

| S.No. | Particulars | Test Results |
|-------|---|--------------|
| 1. | Grain Size Distribution Sand (%) | 10% |
| | Silt + Clay (%) | 90% |
| 2. | Liquid Limit (%) | 64 |
| 3. | Plastic Limit (%) | 33 |
| 4. | Plasticity Index (%) | 31 |
| 5. | Specific Gravity | 2.69 |
| 6. | Optimum Moisture Content (%) | 19 |
| 7. | Maximum Dry Density (KN/m^3) | 15.572 |
| 8. | Differential Free Swell (%) | 45.32 |
| 9. | Unconfined Compressive Strength (KN/m^2) | 130 |

- 2) **Silica Fume:** Silica fume is a by-product which is produced during the reduction of high-purity quartz with coal in electric arc furnaces in the production of silicon and ferrosilicon alloys. The silica fume used in this study was 'Elkem Silica' Grade 920 is a dry silica fume powder. The composition of silica fume is presented in table:

Table2- Chemical and physical properties of silica fume

| Property | SiO ₂ | H ₂ O | Loss of ignition | Retained on 45 micron sieve | Pozzolanic Activity Index, 7 days | Bulk density |
|---------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Specified Value (ASTM C1240-14) | Maximum 85% | Maximum 3% | Maximum 6% | Maximum 10% | Minimum 105% of control | 500-700 Kg/m ³ |
| Analysis | 87.64 | 0.28 | 1.20 | 0.25 | 124 | 625 |

II. TESTING METHODOLOGY

Laboratory tests were performed on locally available soil mixed with silica fume at various percentages i.e. 0%, 2.5%, 5%, 7.5% by weight of dry soil are as follows :-

- A. Grain size distribution
- B. Liquid limit
- C. Plastic limit
- D. Plasticity index
- E. Specific gravity
- F. Standard proctor test
- G. Differential free swell (DFS)
- H. California bearing ratio (C.B.R.)
- I. Unconfined compressive strength (UCS)

III. RESULTS AND DECLARATION

The test results obtained from various laboratory investigations are summarized in table:

| S.N. | Particulars of tests | Soil + SF 0% | Soil + SF 2.5% | Soil + SF 5% | Soil + SF 7.5 % |
|------|--|--------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 1. | Soil Classification | CL | | | |
| 2. | Liquid Limit (%) | 26 | 24 | 23 | 23 |
| 3. | Plastic Limit (%) | 20 | 21 | 22 | 22 |
| 4. | Plasticity Index (%) | 6 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| 5. | Specific Gravity | 2.61 | 2.59 | 2.58 | 2.57 |
| 6. | Optimum Moisture Content (%) | 14.30 | 13.27 | 12.30 | 13.50 |
| 7. | Maximum Dry Density (kN/m ³) | 1.55 | 1.60 | 1.72 | 1.61 |
| 8. | Differential Free Swell (%) | 32.50 | 30.20 | 28.30 | 26.70 |
| 9. | Unconfined Compressive Strength (kN/m ²) | 130 | 145 | 180 | 176 |

Table for California Bearing Ratio (CBR)

| S.No. | Penetration | Soil + SF 0% | Soil + SF 2.5% | Soil + SF 5% | Soil + SF 7.5% |
|-------|-------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1. | 2.5 mm | 1.98 | 2.451 | 4.50 | 3.50 |
| 2. | 5 mm | 1.98 | 2.50 | 2.70 | 2.80 |

| SF% | SOIL +0% SF | SOIL+2.5% SF | SOIL+5% SF | SOIL+ 7.5% |
|-----|-------------|--------------|------------|------------|
| CU | 27.20 | 33.60 | 40.30 | 38.30 |
| Φ | 4 | 17 | 20 | 22 |

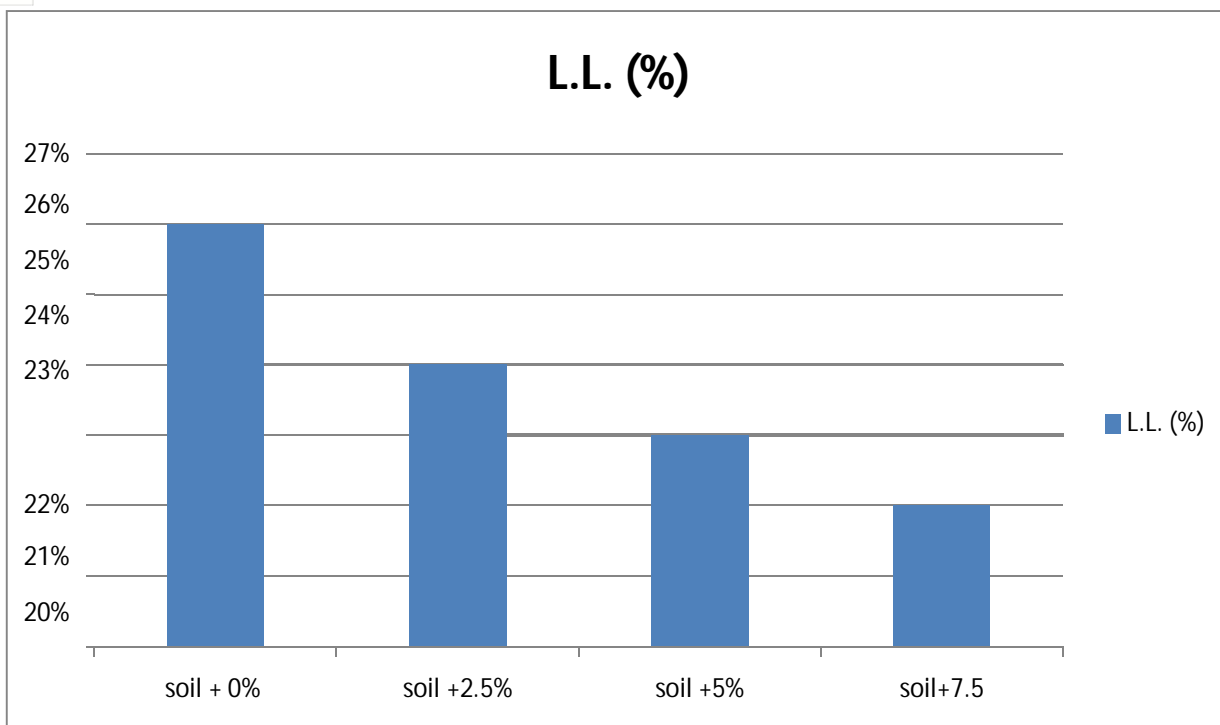


Fig.1. Chart showing the variation in L.L. for mix proportion of soil and silica fume

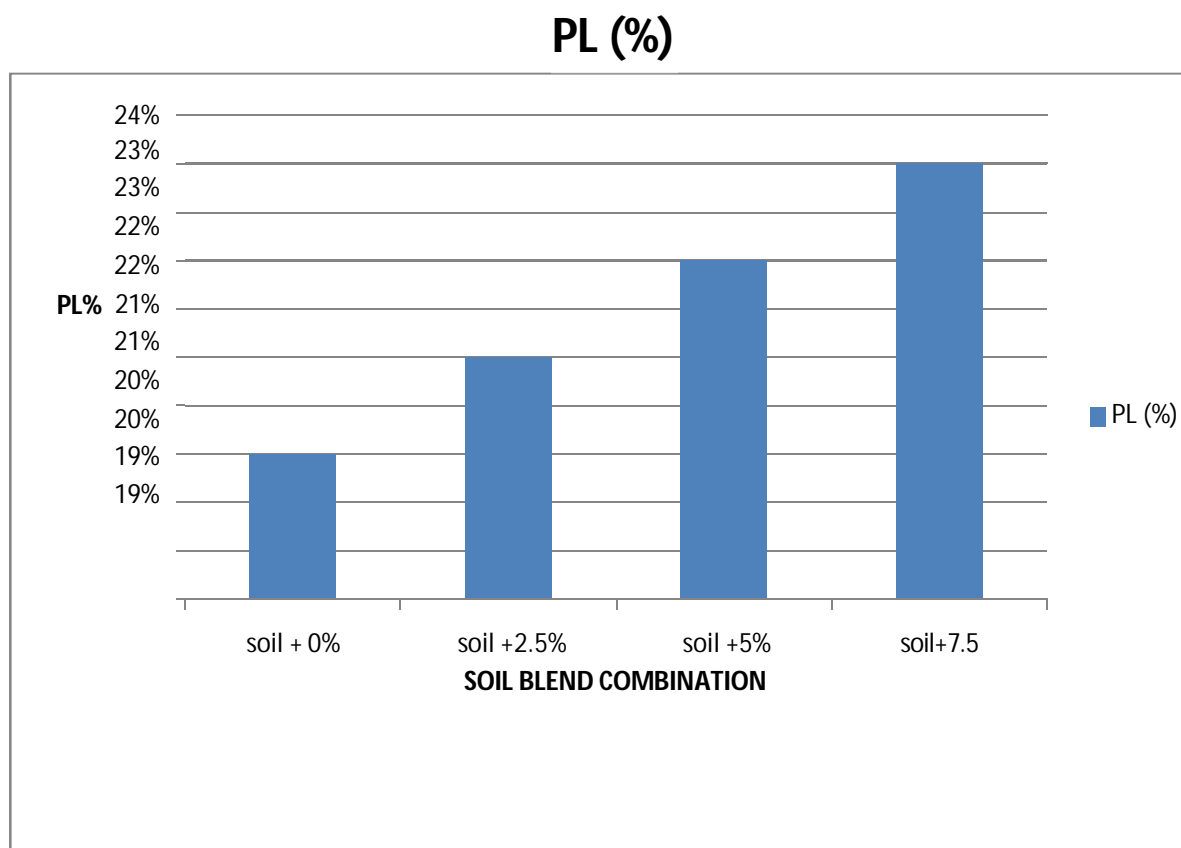


Fig.2. Chart showing the variation in PL for mix proportion of soil and silica fume

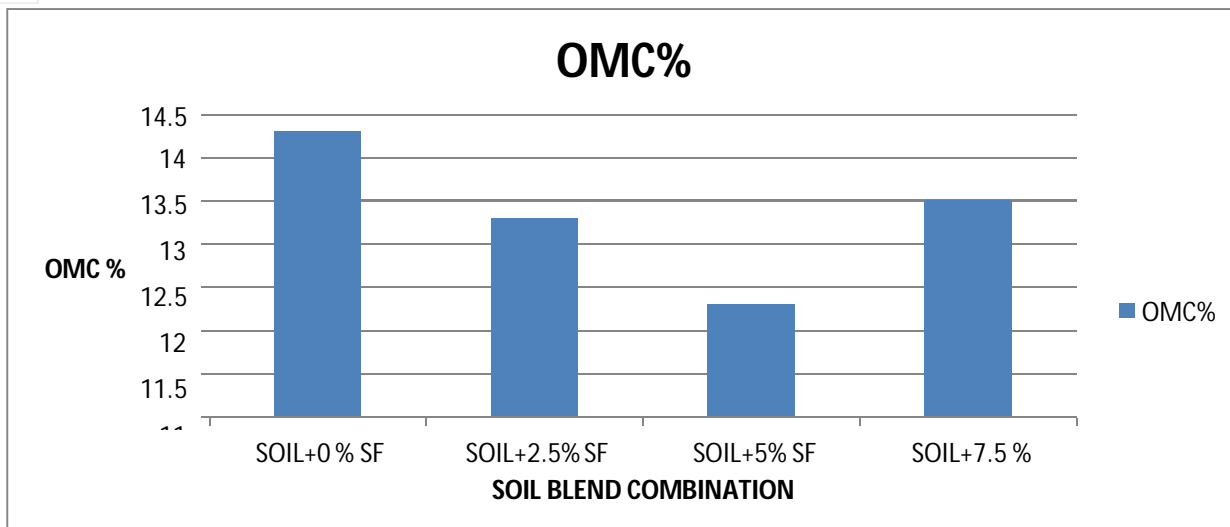


Fig .3. Chart showing the variation in OMC for mix proportion of soil and silica fume

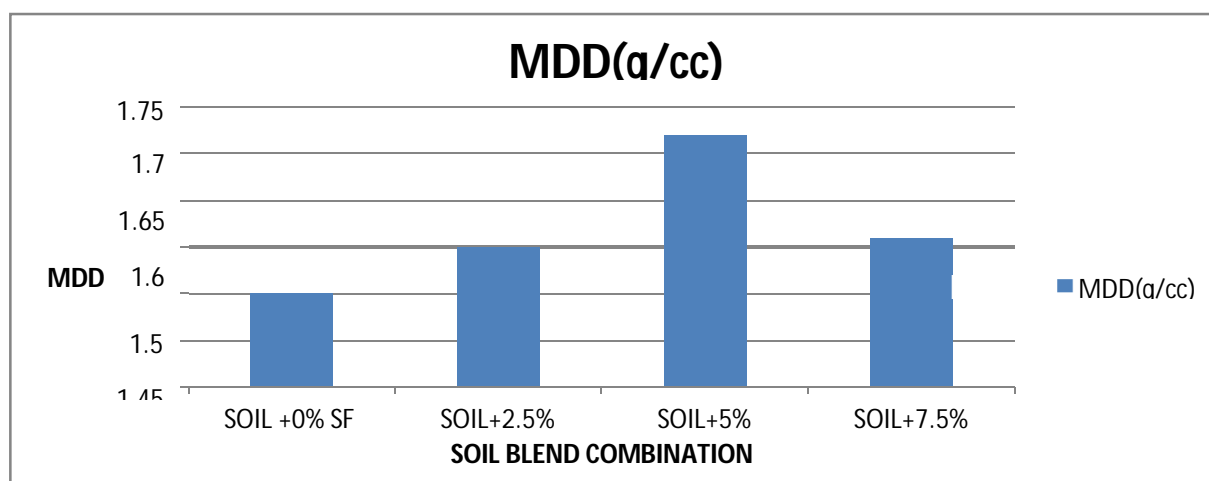


Fig .3. Chart showing the variation in MDD for mix proportion of soil and silica fume

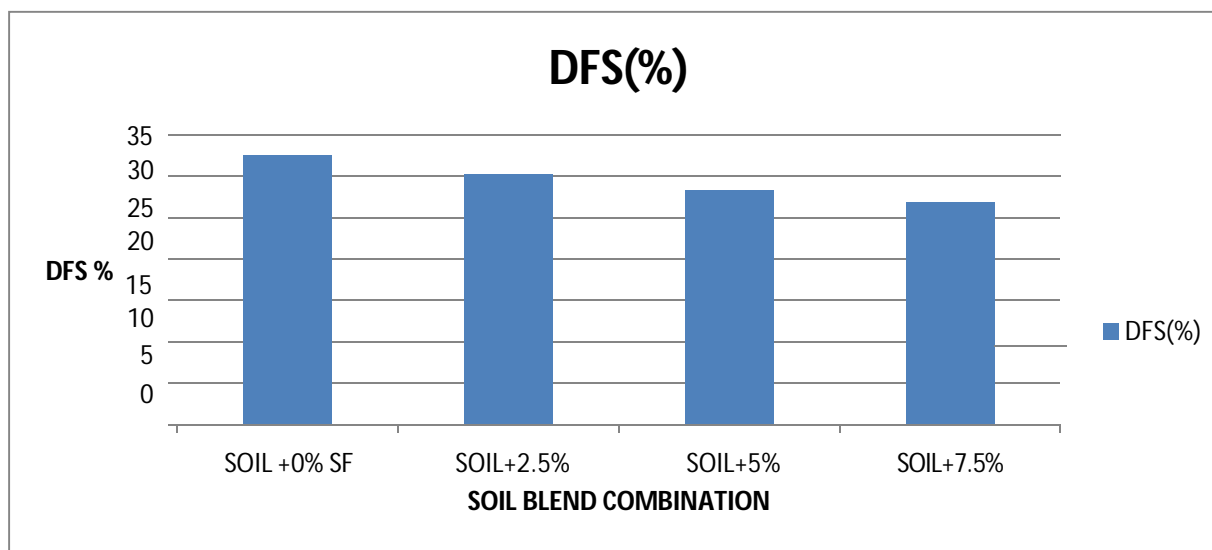


Fig.4. Chart showing the variation in DFS for mix proportion of soil and silica fume

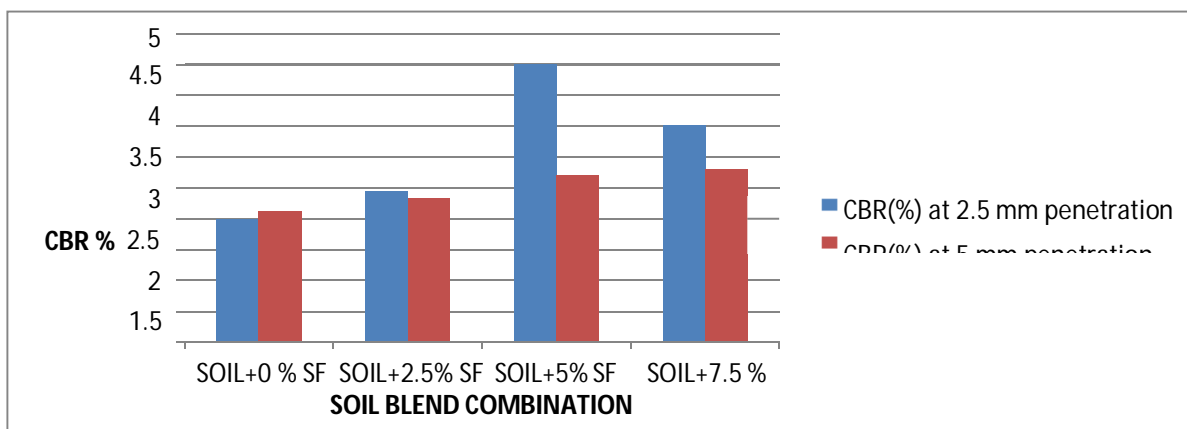


Fig. 5. Chart showing the variation in CBR for mix proportion of soil and silica fume

IV. CONCLUSION

Study reveals that a number of tests has been performed by blending different percentages of silica fume powder with the soil-samples. It is found that the index properties and swelling properties have been enhanced by addition of different percentage of silica fume. Tests concluded that liquid limit decreased from 26% to 23%, plastic limit increased from 20% to 22%, OMC decreased from 14.30% to 13.50% at 7.5% replacement of silica fume with soil. A slight increase is noted in maximum dry density and high amount of decrement in DFS is observed. CBR value is increased from 1.98% to 3.50%. Thus locally available soil stabilized with silica fume can be used for the constructions of embankments and pavements in rural roads.

V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank my guide Dr. M.K. TRIVEDI for guidance and support. This research would not have been possible without his guidance, support and encouragement. All the tests were performed in the Geotechnical lab of MITS College, so I am indebted to lab faculties for their fruitful cooperation.

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