Electromagnetic and Microwave Absorption Properties of Ni$_{0.5}$ Zn$_{0.5}$ Fe$_2$O$_4$ Nano Ferrite/PU Based Nano-Composite

KC Tripathi$^1$, SM Abbas$^2$, RB Sharma$^3$, PS Alegaonker$^4$, Manish Verma$^5$, Sarvesh Kumar$^6$

$^{1,2}$Defense Institute of Advance Technology, DIAT, Gippsland, Pune-411 025, India
$^3$240, DRDO Bhawan, Rajaji Marg, New Delhi-110 011, India
$^{1,2,5,6}$Defense Materials and Stores Research and Development Establishment, Kanpur-208 013, India

Abstract- Toroidal shaped sample of 40% (by wt.) Ni-Zn ferrite nano powder (Ni$_{0.5}$ Zn$_{0.5}$ Fe$_2$O$_4$) loaded in polyurethane (PU) matrix has been successfully prepared. Electromagnetic and Microwave absorption properties of prepared Ni-Zn nano-ferrite (Ni$_{0.5}$ Zn$_{0.5}$ Fe$_2$O$_4$)/PU based nano composite have been studied. Simulation study for metal backed single layered absorber has been carried out for examining the electromagnetic (EM) absorbing properties for different thicknesses of the sample. The vector network analyser (Model PNA E8364B, Software module 85071E) attached with coaxial measurement setup has been utilized to investigate the complex permittivity ($\varepsilon$) & permeability ($\mu$). Microwave absorbing properties were investigated by utilizing the measured values of complex permittivity and complex permeability of the absorber in a frequency range of 2 GHz to 18 GHz. Reflection losses (dB) has also been determined for various thicknesses of the composite employing the simulation code for metal backed single layer absorber. SEM and TGA were performed to analyze the morphological and thermal behavior of the nano composite. The complex permittivity and permeability of the nano composite are found to be frequency dependent. Sample has depicted an increase in reflection loss (R$_L$) with increasing sample thicknesses from t= 1.0 mm, 2.0 mm and 3.0 mm. This nano composite may find applications in EMI shielding for S, C & X band frequencies and medium observable objects.

Keywords- EMI Shielding, Ferrites, Permittivity, Permeability, dielectric loss tangent, Reflection loss

I. INTRODUCTION

Microwaves have always been an important area of research in electromagnetic interference shielding to minimize the cross-talk among electronic communicating devices, Radar cross section (RCS) reduction for electromagnetic counter measures and Microwave filters [1, 6, and 7]. In recent times, ferrite based materials have been used as radar absorbing materials in S, C, X and Ku frequency bands & for EMI shielding. Ferrites being ferri-magnetic in nature can tailor the electromagnetic properties of the dielectric matrix materials when selectively mixed in it. Among the numerous electric and magnetic properties exhibited by ferrites based nanocomposites, the permittivity ($\varepsilon$) and permeability ($\mu$) are main factors for the designing the radar absorbing materials (RAM) [1, 2]. As per the requirement and applications, RAM are been engineered to get the desired level of RCS reduction, Microwave (MW) absorption or EMI shielding. Recently a lot of attempts have been made to develop various types of nano-ferrite based RAM [2, 3, 4, and 5]. Studies have also been conducted to engineer these parameters towards the development of ferrites based RAMs with significantly larger bandwidth. These are typically 1 mm to 3 mm thick polymeric materials surface, dispersed with magnetic nano particles. It has been seen that ferrites have better EMI suppression properties in the X band frequencies (8-12 GHz) [8]. In this paper, we have reported the electromagnetic and microwave absorption properties of nano Ni-Zn nano ferrite based nanocomposite prepared by mixing 40% (wt.) Ni$_{0.5}$ Zn$_{0.5}$ Fe$_2$O$_4$ Nano-powder in Poly-urethane matrix. It is observed that this composition may be very useful in EMI shielding for S, C and X band frequencies.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Nano-composite preparation is carried out by using Ni$_{0.5}$ Zn$_{0.5}$ Fe$_2$O$_4$ nano-ferrite powder thoroughly mixed using acetone medium in two pack polyurethane matrix consists of polyol-8 (Ciba-Geigy, Switzerland) and hexamethylene di-isocynate (E Merck, Germany) mixed in 50–50 ratios. 40% (by wt) Ni$_{0.5}$ Zn$_{0.5}$ Fe$_2$O$_4$ nano-ferrite was mixed in PU. The mixture was homogenized in mortar and pestle and then put in the mould followed by curing it under heat and pressure in a hydraulic press. The sample was prepared in toroidal shape with an outer diameter of 7.0 mm, an inner diameter of 3.0 mm to fit in co-axial waveguide sample holder.

III. MICROWAVE MEASUREMENTS

Electromagnetic parameters (complex permittivity and Complex permeability) of composite were investigated using AGILENT vector network analyser Model PNA E8364B for the frequency range of 2 GHz to 18 GHz. The
frequency dependence of permittivity ($\varepsilon'$, $\varepsilon''$) and permeability ($\mu'$, $\mu''$) for Ni$_{0.5}$Zn$_{0.5}$Fe$_2$O$_4$ Nano-ferrite PU composite are shown in Figure 1. From 2-14 GHz i.e. till 14 GHz the $\varepsilon'$ remains constant and at higher frequency (15-18 GHz) the dielectric constant ($\varepsilon'$) increases probably due to the ferrimagnetic nature of Ni-Zn ferrite filler. The dielectric loss component ($\varepsilon''$) is nearly negligible hence there is no absorption of Micro-waves. The $\varepsilon''$ is defined as $\varepsilon'' = \sigma/\omega$, as this composition is ferrimagnetic insulating because the dielectric loss component ($\varepsilon''$) is nearly zero hence conductivity is nearly negligible. In transient EM field the Ni-Zn Ferrite sample exhibits the relation given by the equation:

$$\varepsilon = \varepsilon' - j\varepsilon''$$

$\varepsilon'$ = Real part of $\varepsilon$ i.e. Dielectric constant
$\varepsilon''$= Imaginary part of $\varepsilon$ i.e. Electric loss component

From the values of $\varepsilon'$ and $\varepsilon''$, it is expected that Ni-Zn Ferrite gives good Electromagnetic properties in S, C and X band frequencies.

$$\varepsilon = \varepsilon' \left(1 - j\frac{\varepsilon''}{\varepsilon'}\right)$$

$$\varepsilon = \varepsilon' \left(1 - j\tan \delta_e\right)$$

It is evident from the figure 2, all the values of $\tan \delta_e$ w.r.t. frequencies (GHz) shows that $\tan \delta_e$ is positive valued and hence the $\varepsilon$ also varies with according to the equation (3).

The electrical tangent loss is given by $\tan \delta_e = \varepsilon''/\varepsilon'$. The $\tan \delta_e$ is the ratio of energy loss per unit radian in the dielectric to the energy stored in the dielectric and its frequency dependent variation is shown in the figure 2 below:

$$\tan \delta_e = \frac{\varepsilon''}{\varepsilon'}$$

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gradually decreases with frequency (GHz). Hence there is gradual decrease in magnetic loss with increasing frequency.

The reflection loss (dB) of the prepared nano-composite sample for various sample thickness has been calculated using experimentally obtained values of $\epsilon_r$ and $\mu_r$ for single layer metal backed condition. The reflection loss for a particular thickness ($t$) is frequency dependent as well as electromagnetic parameters ($\epsilon$, $\mu$) dependent and is given by the equations 4 and 5 below:

$$Z_{in} = \sqrt{\frac{\mu_r}{\epsilon_r}} \tanh \left[ j \left( \frac{2\pi f t}{c} \right) \sqrt{\mu_r \epsilon_r} \right]$$  \hspace{1cm} (4)

$$R_L (dB) = 20 \log \left| \frac{Z_{in} - 1}{Z_{in} + 1} \right|$$  \hspace{1cm} (5)

where $Z_{in}$ is the normalized impedance of the air-absorber interface layer, $c$ is the speed of light, $f$ is the frequency of EM wave respectively.

Further, it is self evident from the figure 5, the reflection loss (dB) is almost constant for various absorber thicknesses in the S (2-4 GHz), C (4-8 GHz) & X (8-12 GHz) band frequencies. Thus it is a potential EMI shielding material in these frequency bands.

The reflection loss at matching frequency increases along-with the increasing matching thickness as shown in the figure 6.

The figure 7 shows the SEM of NiZn Ferrite. It is illustrated from the figure that NiZn ferrite (Ni$_{0.5}$Zn$_{0.5}$Fe$_2$O$_4$) filler is dispersed non-uniformly in a form of spherical nanoparticles embedded in PU matrix.

The figure 7 shows the SEM of NiZn Ferrite. It is illustrated from the figure that NiZn ferrite (Ni$_{0.5}$Zn$_{0.5}$Fe$_2$O$_4$) filler is dispersed non-uniformly in a form of spherical nanoparticles embedded in PU matrix.
Thermo gravimetric analysis (TGA) has been carried out to study the thermal stability of the prepared nano-ferrite sample. Figure 8 shows the TGA plot of prepared nano-ferrite which exhibits weight loss in several steps. But the prepared nano-ferrite is found to have a thermal stability at least up to 280 °C.

IV. CONCLUSION

We have successfully prepared the NiZn Ferrite /PU based torroidal shaped nano-composite. The nano ferrite have been found thermally stable upto 280 °C. This Ram has particular matching frequency at a particular thickness. Thus these NiZn Ferrite /PU based nano-composite ferrite can be used for EMI shielding & medium observable objects.

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AUTHOR'S PROFILE

Dr. S.M. Abbas is presently Scientist "F", Joint Director and head of Central Analytical Facilities in Defence Materials and Stores Research and Development Establishment (DMSRDE), Kanpur, India. He did his M. Tech. in Metallurgical Engg. and Materials Science from IIT Bombay in 1997 and Ph.D. in Physics (Solid state materials) from IIT Delhi in 2007. His area of interest is characterization of materials, development of camouflage materials/products, Radar and multispectral Camouflage Net, Mobile Camouflage System, and Radar absorbing Materials Composites. He has published 12 papers in reputed journals and presented 10 papers in International conferences. He received two best paper awards: one in International conference on Advanced Materials (ICAM 2007) at IISc., Bangalore, and another in MRSI conference 1997 at BARC Mumbai. He has also received DRDO cash 1999 for development of thermal Pads.
| **Dr. R.B. Sharma** | obtained M.Sc. (Physics) from Agra University (1979), M. Phil (Physics) from Rajasthan University (1986) and PhD from Pune University (1997). He has taught Physics courses at undergraduate/ Post graduate/ doctoral level for more than 30 years. He has supervised 3 Ph.D. and 8 M. Tech/ MS theses. Presently, he is working as Scientist „G” at DRDO headquarters, New Delhi and also as an adjunct faculty at the Department of Applied Physics, DIAT Pune, India. He has published more than 33 research papers in International journals. |
| **Mr. Manish Verma** | received his M.Sc. degree in Physics (specialization in electronics) from University of Lucknow, U.P. (India) in 2005. From 2008, he has joined Defence Research & Development Organisation as Scientist ‘B’. Presently, he is working in as Scientist ‘C’ in DMSRDE, Kanpur. His areas of interests are materials science & electronics. He has published 02 research papers in International journals. |
| **Mr. Sarvesh Kumar** | received his M.Sc. degree in Computer Science from JK Institute, Allahabad University, U.P. (India) in 1988. From 1989, he has joined Defence Research & Development Organization. Presently, he is working in as Scientist ‘F’ in DMSRDE, Kanpur. His areas of interests are Computer Science. |
| **K.C. Tripathi** | received the M.Sc. degree in Physics (specialization in electronics) from CSJM University, Kanpur. U.P. (India) in 1997 and M. Tech. Degree in Computer Science and Engineering from Allahabad Agricultural Institute, Deemed University, Allahabad in 2007. He has joined Ph.D. (Applied Physics) program from Defence Institute of Advance Technology, Pune. Presently, he is working as Technical Officer in DMSRDE, Kanpur. He has published 04 research papers in International journals. |
| **Dr. P.S. Alegaonkar** | received the M.Sc. degree in Physics (specialization in nuclear techniques) from University of Pune, Pune, Maharashtra (India) in 1999 and Ph.D. degree in Physics from same department in 2004. From Mar 2010, he has joined Defence Institute of Advance Technology, Pune. Presently, he is working in as Assistant Professor in Applied Physics Department. |