

INDIGENIZATION OF INDIAN RAILWAY TRACK MAINTENANCE MACHINE PARTS



Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment for the
Award of degree

Doctor of Philosophy

By

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Dedicated to...

My Beloved Parents

(Smt. Sharmila Pandey & Shri Dinesh Prakash Pandey)

&

Wife & Daughter

(Smt. Mamta Mishra & Shrinika)

'न चोरहार्यं न राजहार्यं न भृतृभाज्यं न च भारकारि!

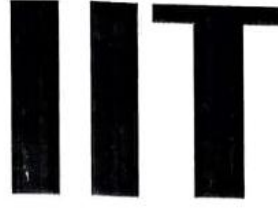
व्यये कृते वर्धति एव नित्यं विद्याधनं सर्वधनप्रधानम्!'

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(Source—Subhasitani)



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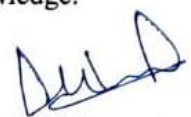
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(Manas Pandey)

PREFACE

Ballast cleaning machines play a pivotal role in maintaining the stability and safety of railway tracks. The ballast cleaning operation involves transfer of ballast from the track and its redistribution on the track. However, the wear plates used in these machines are subjected to extreme conditions, making the assessment of their wear performance crucial. This study scrutinizes the wear performance of two distinct wear plate used in the ballast cleaning machines. The wear tests were conducted on a German grade steel wear plate used in the ballast cleaning machine and an indigenous grade steel used as alternative. Wear analysis uncovers pivotal insights, as indigenous wear plate consistently exhibits higher weight loss for both the ballast pin and disk under various loading conditions. In contrast, German Grade Plasser-wear plates demonstrate a declining average weight loss at higher loads, showcasing its superior wear resistance and resistance to indentation due to the presence of fine laths in the microstructure. The key factors contribute to this improved wear performance, includes relatively larger amount of high-angle grain boundaries, high dislocation density, small grain size, and variations in micro-alloying elements. The compositional analysis indicates a low amount of carbon in both wear plates. The microstructural analysis shows that both samples have a single Body-Centered Cubic (BCC) crystal structure, with a randomly distributed heterogeneous ferritic and cementite phase in a lath-bainitic microstructure. This comprehensive study provides valuable insights into the wear behaviour of these alloy steels, contributing to the optimization of wear plate materials for ballast cleaning machines.

The tensile test & fracture test was conducted on universal testing machine (100KN capacity) for evaluating the percentage elongation vs strength criterion for both the samples in which Plasser sample has UTS about 1270 MPa and % Elongation about

18% and RDSO sample has UTS about 1195 MPa and %Elongation about 21%. Fatigue crack growth rate (FCGR) test is conducted to evaluate the behavior of both RDSO and PLASSER sample to monitor the crack growth rate & fracture toughness of both the samples through compact tension (CT) test was done followed by fractography of CT samples were studied through Field Emission Scanning Electron Microscope which shows the kind of fracture morphology. A brittle mode of fracture was observed in the Plasser-samples whereas a comparatively fibrous failure was observed in the RDSO-samples. In contrast PLASSER sample showcase good properties due to higher proportion of high-angle grain boundaries, a high dislocation density and smaller grain size.

The focus of the present study is the analysis of the microstructure and mechanical properties of Boron Carbide (B₄C) reinforced coating deposited over RDSO grade wear steel plate. Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM), and optical microscopy were used for characterizing the coating. Mechanical properties were evaluated by Wear Tribology Pin on disk test. It was found that the B₄C coating has a morphology that is well bonded to the substrate. The coating-substrate assembly exhibited better Wear Properties as compare to RDSO uncoated sample. Properties with a micro-hardness of 428 HV which is as per the requirement of maintenance purpose of railways. The coating being mostly brittle and the substrate behaving in a ductile manner.

Ensuring operational safety and effectiveness in relation to railways also means that the process of identifying and monitoring railway track locations has to be done with a high degree of accuracy. Other traditional methods of track inspection, such as manual check-ups and basic image-processing structures, are most of the times too slow, labor-intensive, and ineffective. In this paper, we present an artificial intelligence-based Railway Track Detection System as a way of making the process of railway track detection and analysis faster and easier using computer vision and deep learning

techniques. A challenge in this system design is the need to discourage blocking of views of the track, detect how the track curved and situated with other tracks, and increase the ability to monitor in real time. Image classification and object detection is done in this system using convolutional neural networks (CNN), which enables the railway track detection system to work accurately even in real time video feeds of railway tracks. The image of a track in a given condition, per weather, lighting and environment, is obtained and used to train the model. This is done to make the model durable so image augmentation is one of the data pre-processing techniques employed and then the model performance is evaluated during validation and testing using precision, recall and score metrics of the model. System architecture allows it to be installed in edge devices as well as on the cloud thus real time processing is made flexible. The results show that the developed system is able to detect tracks with an accuracy greater than 95% which is a slightly lower than the false positive rate of the traditional approach. The AI-based system not only enhances the accuracy levels of detection but it also enables the provision of alerts automatically whenever there are any anomalies detected on the railway tracks thereby helping in quick railway response strategies. Although the model is highly effective, there are several problems observed such as processing time and dealing with rare edge cases. In the future, more effective model optimization techniques will be developed and the dataset improved, aiming at its generalization. The intelligent railway track detection system constitutes a big step in rail infrastructure monitoring. It is a solution that can be scaled up and it could change the way rail safety and maintenance is approached.

The inclusive investigations on the railway track maintenance machine parts in the present thesis are given below:

- To indigenize the wear plate of Ballast cleaning machine and to resolve the

challenges associated with that.

- Microstructural & Wear investigation of Plasser & RDSO wear plate sample of Ballast Cleaning Machine (OES, Optical, SEM, XRD & Pin on Disk Wear Testing).
- Mechanical & fracture behavior of both samples & their Comparative Analysis.
- Microstructural characterization and mechanical properties of boron carbide (B₄C) coating on RDSO (Research Design & Std. Org.) steel Sample.
- Artificial intelligence based railway track defect detection system.

The thesis is organized in 6 different chapters. A brief description of these chapters and their important results are as follows:

Chapter 1: A foundation for basic definitions, terms and concepts Indian railway track maintenance machines and their important parts have been given in this chapter. This chapter explains the changing scenario of Indian Railway Track Maintenance from manual to automation. All machines which are imported from Austrian companies Plasser & Theurer are explained. Due to high German standards, some parts of Indigenized machines, which need to replace after some intervals, having the higher cost. This leads to indigenizing those important parts. A brief literature review of previous investigations on indigenization of track maintenance machines & their important parts. Review investigated the materials which Indian railway is using for manufacturing parts of these machines. The objectives of the thesis are listed at the end.

Chapter 2: The research presented in this chapter focuses on the microstructural & wear performance of two types of ballast cleaning machines wear plates, namely the Plasser and RDSO sample plates. Specifically, the Plasser sample was used as the wear plate in

the ballast cleaning machine; RDSO sample was used as a domestic counterpart of the wear plate. Microstructural examination conducted by Electron Backscatterer Diffraction (EBSD) is seen to establish that the crystal structure of the two samples had a single Body-Centered Cubic (BCC) crystal but the morphology had heterogeneous ferritic and bainitic phases. No doubt, the wear analysis provides certain important realizations; for instance, the RDSO sample loses weight more than the ballast pin and RSDO disk under the stress. In other words, as load increase Plasser sample average weight loss decreases indicating that its resistance to wear and indentation is greater.

Chapter 3: This chapter proceeds with a brief introduction of evaluation of Mechanical & Fracture behavior of two distinct wear plates used in ballast cleaning machines. This study helps in evaluating the mechanical and fracture behavior of two distinct wear plates used in ballast cleaning machines. The tensile test & fracture test was conducted on universal testing machine (100 KN capacity for tensile test and 25 KN capacity for fracture Test) evaluating the percentage elongation vs strength criterion for both the samples. Fatigue crack growth rate (FCGR) test is conducted to evaluate the behavior of both RDSO and PLASSER sample to monitor the crack growth rate & fracture toughness of both the samples through compact tension (CT) test was done followed by fractography of CT samples were studied through FESEM which shows the kind of fracture morphology. PLASSER sample showcase good properties like high fracture toughness & high tensile strength due to higher proportion of high-angle grain boundaries, a high dislocation density and smaller grain size.

Chapter 4: This chapter briefly introduces coating on RDSO steel samples using a thermal spraying technique. Microstructural examinations were performed using scanning electron microscopy (SEM) and optical microscope to characterize the coating's homogeneity, adhesion, and interfacial bonding with the steel substrate. Mechanical

tests, including hardness testing, tensile strength, and wear test were conducted to understand the coated sample's performance compared to the uncoated counterpart. This comparative analysis suggests that B4C-coated RDSO wear plate steel is a promising railways for wear plate applications in ballast cleaning machines, providing increased lifespan and better performance.

Chapter 5: This chapter proceeds with a brief introduction to an artificial intelligence-based Railway Track Detection System, which uses computer vision and deep learning techniques to make the process of railway track detection and analysis faster and easier. Image classification and object detection is done in this system using convolutional neural networks (CNN), which enables the railway track detection system to work accurately even in real time video feeds of railway tracks. The image of a track in a given condition, per weather, lighting and environment, is obtained and used to train the model. This is done to make the model durable so image augmentation is one of the data pre-processing techniques employed and then the model performance is evaluated during validation and testing using precision.

Chapter 6: This chapter summarizes the main findings of the research work carried out for the present PhD thesis and lists a few important suggestions for future investigations.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	viii
PREFACE	x
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	..xvi
LIST OF TABLES	..xix
LIST OF FIGURES	..xx
ABBREVIATIONS.....	xxxiii
NOTATION	xxxiv
CHAPTER 1 . Introduction and Literature Review.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Machines for Ballast Cleaning & Handling	5
1.3 The main components of a typical Ballast Cleaning Machines	6
1.4 Classification of BCM on Indian Railways tracks	7
1.5 Working Principle and Capabilities of BCM	8
1.6 Trial of En19 & En24 Steel for certain Parts of Indigenized maintenance Machines	14
1.7 Challenges with German Standard part in India.....	15
1.8 En19 & its desirable properties in Railways	17
1.9 En24 & its Application in Indian Railway Maintenance Machines	19
1.10 Inferences drawn from Literature Review.....	23
1.11 Objectives of the Thesis.....	30
CHAPTER 2. Investigating microstructure and wear characteristics of alloy steels used as wear plates in ballast cleaning operation in railways.....	31
2.1 Introduction.....	32
2.2 Materials and Methods used in Investigation	35
2.3 Pin-on-Disk Tribology for Wear Analysis	36
2.4 Wear Rate Calculations	38

2.5	Coefficient of Friction Calculations	39
2.6.1	X-ray Diffraction (XRD) Analysis	40
2.6.2	Optical Microstructure Analysis.....	41
2.6.3	SEM Analysis	43
2.7	EBSD Analysis	43
2.8	Wear Rate and Hardness Evaluation	45
2.9	Discussion.....	49
2.10	Conclusions	50

CHAPTER 3. Mechanical & fracture behavior of Plasser & RDSO wear plate samples & their Comparative Analysis.....52

3.1	Introduction.....	53
3.2	Materials & Method	56
3.3	Material Characterization	57
3.4	Tensile Properties	61
3.5	FCGR (Fatigue Crack Growth Rate).....	62
3.6	J1C Test (Plane Stress Fracture Toughness)	63
3.7	Load Point Displacement Curve.....	64
3.8	Fractography.....	64
3.9.1	Effect of Alloying Element on Mechanical Properties.....	66
3.9.2	Fractography.....	67
3.10	Conclusions	68

CHAPTER 4. Microstructural and Mechanical Properties of Boron Carbide (B4C) Coated RDSO Wear Plate Sample.....70

4.1	Introduction.....	71
4.2	Boron Carbide (B4C) Powder Preparation.....	72
4.3	Processing of High Velocity Oxygen Fuel Coating of B4C on RDSO sample.....	73
4.4	Microstructural Properties of B4C Coated RDSO sample	77
4.5	Mechanical Behavior of B4C Coated RDSO & Uncoated RDSO sample....	80
4.6	Conclusions	84

CHAPTER 5. AI Based Railway Track Detection system	86
5.1 Introduction.....	87
5.2 Development of Track Monitoring & Inspection	90
5.3 System Architecture and Implementation Methodology	93
5.4 Data Collection and Processing Methodology	95
5.5 Neural Network Architecture and Training Methodology	96
5.6 Experimental Validation and Testing Procedures	101
5.7 System Performance Analysis	101
5.8 Economic Impact and Operational Efficiency	106
5.9 Long-term Performance Analysis and System Reliability	108
5.10 Comparative Analysis with Existing Technologies	109
5.11 Environmental Adaptability and Robustness	110
5.12 Future Implications and Development Potential	110
5.13 Conclusions	111
CHAPTER 6. Summary & Future Scope	114
6.1 Summary of the Thesis.....	115
6.2 Future scope of Indian Railway Track Maintenance Machines & Track Detection System.....	119
REFERENCES	122
LIST OF PUBLICATIONS	136
CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS ATTENDED.....	137

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1: Difference between European standard & British standard.....	17
Table 1.2: Chemical configuration of En19 steel used by Indian railway [17].....	17
Table 1.3: Ultimate Stress & Breaking Load of EN19 Steel Alloy.....	18
Table 1.4: Properties of En19.....	19
Table 1.5: Literature Review.....	20
Table 1.6: List of all wear plate with their life calculated on real time basis.....	27
Table 2.1: Composition analysis obtained by Optical Emission Spectroscopy (OES) analysis for the PLASSER sample, and RDSO sample.....	36
Table 2.2: Pin on disc wear test parameters.....	38
Table 2.3: Estimating weight loss for Ballast pin & disc subjected to different loads.....	45
Table 3.1: Composition analysis obtained by XRF (X-ray fluorescence) analyser for the sample S1, and S2.....	56
Table 4.1: Estimating weight loss for Ballast pin & disc subjected to different loads.....	81
Table 5.1: Comprehensive system performance metrics across different operating conditions.....	102
Table 5.2: Defect classification performance by category and severity.....	105
Table 5.3: Economic impact analysis over 18-month period.....	107

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig.1.1: Railway track geometry faults.....	3
Fig.1.2: Railway ballast & track geometry	4
Fig.1.3: Schematic view of ballast cleaning machine.....	5
Fig.1.4: Block diagram of process of reverse engineering	15
Fig.1.5: Types of rocks founded in Europe (a) & India (b) for ballast material.....	16
Fig.1.6: A typical Ballast cleaning machine with its important parts	24
Fig.1.7: Ballast movement flow diagram on ballast cleaning machine	25
Fig.1.8: Fig.1.8: Wear plates of ballast cleaning machine.....	26
Fig.2.1: Ballast cleaning machine in operation on a railway track, ballast material and the wear-resistant components are shown for clarity	33
Fig.2.2: Pin on disk wear test with a cylindrical ballast material attached to the sample holder.....	37
Fig.2.3: XRD pattern of as-received wear plate Plasser sample S1 & RDSO sample S2.....	40
Fig.2.4: Images of the as-received wear plate samples (a) PLASSER sample, and (b) RDSO sample	41
Fig.2.5: Optical images of wear PLASSER sample & RDSO sample showing bainitic lath microstructure at (a) 20x magnification, and (b) 50x magnification.....	42
Fig.2.6: (a) SEM, and (b) BSE microstructural images of as received PLASSER sample S1 and RDSO sample S2..	43
Fig.2.7: EBSD images of PLASSER sample S1, and RDSO sample S2 (a) Image Quality map, (b) Grain scale map, (c) Grain boundary map, (d) Grain scale map for misorientation, (e) Phase map, and (f) Distribution of grain-boundary misorientation angle.	44

Fig.2.8: Weight loss analysis on PLASSER sample S1 and RDSO sample S2 (a) Weight loss observed on the disk and, (b) Weight loss observed on the ballast-pin.....	46
Fig.2.9: Comparison of coefficient of friction at different loads of (a) 10N, (b) 15N, (c) 20N for the wear plate PLASSER sample S1 and RDSO sample S2.....	47
Fig.2.10: Effect of varying loads on (a) average coefficient of friction, wear rate of (b) PLASSER sample S1 and RDSO sample S2, and (c) ballast pin on PLASSER sample S1 and RDSO sample S2.....	48
Fig.3.1: Typical view of ballast cleaning machine and wear plate.....	54
Fig.3.2: Dimension of various specimen (a) Tensile Specimen 3D Model (b) CT Specimen 3D Model (c) Actual Tensile Specimen Plasser & RDSO (d) Actual CT Sample of Plasser & RDSO	58
Fig.3.3: Schematic view of Instron100KN Testing Machine & CT Specimen	59
Fig.3.4: da/dN vs ΔK curve showing crack growth rate at 50Hz.....	60
Fig.3.5: Typical engineering stress Strain curve.....	61
Fig.3.6: Typical FCGR curve (a) RDSO (b) PLASSER.....	62
Fig.3.7: Typical LDP curve (a) PLASSER (b) RDSO	63
Fig.3.8: Fractography images of (a) S1-sample at 500X and (b) S2-sample at 500X (c) S1-sample at 200X (d) S2-sample at 250X	65
Fig.4.1: Representation of a high velocity oxy-fuel (HVOF) coating process	74
Fig.4.2: Optical image of B4C Coating thickness along the cross section.....	78
Fig.4.3: SEM Image of B4C coated RDSO Wear plate sample	79
Fig.4.4: Average Disk weight loss for RDSO coated & uncoated sample	80
Fig.4.5: Variation of coefficient of friction (COF) with time at 10N load.....	82
Fig.4.6: Variation of coefficient of friction (COF) with time at 15N load.....	82

Fig.4.7: The wear rate Analysis on RDSO sample and Carbide Coated RDSO sample are obtained at different loads.....	83
Fig.4.8: Micro-hardness of Coated & uncoated RDSO sample tested at 0.1Kgf	84
Fig.5.1: AI Railway Track Detection System Architecture	94
Fig.5.2: Data Processing Pipeline	95
Fig.5.3: Neural Network Architecture	96
Fig.5.4: Performance Metrics Dashboard.....	102
Fig.5.5: Environmental Performance Evaluation.....	104
Fig.5.6: Environmental Impact Analysis Graph.....	104
Fig.5.7: System Processing Pipeline and Latency Analysis	106
Fig.5.8: Cost-Benefit Analysis Chart.....	108
Fig.5.9: System Reliability Timeline	109
Fig.5.10: Future Development Roadmap.....	111

ABBREVIATIONS

BCM	Ballast Cleaning Machine
TRT	Track Relay Trains
CTRT	Continuous Track Renewal Trains
DTS	Dynamic Track Stabilizer
SEM	Scanning Electron Microscope
EBSD	Electron Backscatter Diffraction
XRD	X-Ray Diffraction
OHE	Overhead Equipment
LWR	Long Welded Rails

NOTATION

Symbols

ΔK	Stress Intensity Factor
Δa	Fatigue Crack Growth
E	Elastic Constant
Hz	Hertz
b	Unbroken Ligament
j	Plane stress fracture toughness