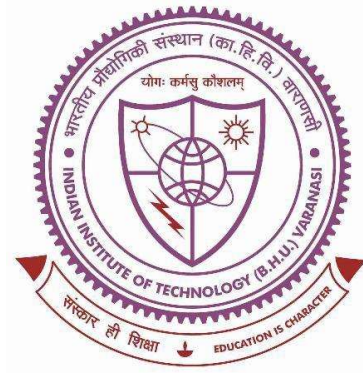


***FLY ASH PARTICULATE REINFORCEMENT FOR
PROPERTY ENHANCEMENT OF PU FOAM CORE
SANDWICH COMPOSITES***



Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment

for the award of degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

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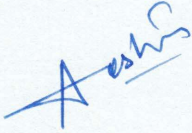
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Abstract

The thesis strives to provide a road map to utilise the fly ash as a viable particulate reinforcement to polyurethane foam (PUF). The work also supports that the understanding the deformation mechanism of the components (face sheet and core) and sandwich composite under different loading condition i.e., compression, shear, bending and indentation, will gives perspective to design a sandwich composite.

In the current study, Silane coupling agent is employed to facilitate adhesion between an organic matrix and an inorganic filler. Thereafter, the shear test has been conducted on treated and untreated fly ash (FA) reinforced PUF core. The findings suggest that the stress carrying capacity of the silane treated FA-PUF outperform the untreated FA-PUF. Thus, the results depict that the FA as particulate reinforcement can be a sustainable option.

Now, the effect of varying FA wt. % inclusion in PUF core has been studies under compression and shear. ASTM C365/C365M and ASTM C273/C273M-16 has been used for compression and shear test respectively. The results shows that the polyurethane foam's shear modulus was improved from 14% to 39% depending on the weight percentage of fly ash inclusion to the neat PUF. While under compression the 20% FA-PUF's modulus is more than twice of the neat PUF.

Later, the glass fiber reinforced polymer (GFRP) and carbon fiber reinforced polymer (CFRP) laminated face sheet has been fabricated and tested according to D3039/D3039M-17 for its tensile strength and modulus. The finding reports that the stiffness of the CFRP laminates is more than 3 time of GFRP.

Now, the sandwich composites were manufactured using GFRP/CFRP face sheet in combination with neat and FA-PUF core. The 3 Point test was conducted according to ASTM C393/C393M-16 to understand the deformation behaviour with varying wt. % of

FA-PUF on GFRP/CFRP sandwich composite. The results shows that CFRP sandwich composites performs better than the GFRP sandwich composites.

After performing the conventional mechanical testing, indentation resistance or response to localised stress is elaborately studied for both bare core and sandwich composite. At first the core alone is taken under consideration, here the effect of indenter geometry (flat-circular, hemispherical and conical) and inclusion of varying FA wt.% to PUF has been studied. The study shows the positive response to the reinforcement, owing to the fact, that the rigidity of the PUF increases with FA reinforcement. After indentation the cross-sectional cut of the damaged PUF core is analysed for the deformation behaviour and to corroborate the variation in performance due to reinforcement and indenter's geometry during indentation test.

At last, the indentation resistance of the sandwich composite has been conducted. The effect of face sheets, FA reinforcement and indenter's nose tip profile is taken under consideration. The CFRP sandwich composite performs better than the GFRP sandwich composite due to the stiff face sheet which provide better resistance against indentation. The study also concluded that the least resistance is offered in case of conical indenter and highest resistance offered by flat-circular indenter, while hemispherical lie in between these two indenters. The effect FA reinforced PUF core GFRP/CFRP sandwich composites are also analysed under different indenter's nose profile.

The improvement in mechanical properties of PUF foam core by employing a low-cost thermal power plant industry by-product fly ash seems to be an attractive alternative for future structural applications. This also has the advantage of reducing environmental hazards and corrosive pollution.

Acknowledgement

I express my sincere thanks and gratitude beyond words to my esteemed supervisor, Prof. S. K. Panda for his consistent help, encouragement, and valuable discussions during the entire period of my research work. It would not have been possible to complete the thesis without his utmost involvement and invaluable efforts. He motivated me to pursue research problem and the need for persistent effort to accomplish the goal. I am truly indebted to him.

Besides my supervisor, I would like to thank my co-supervisor Prof. Arnab Sarkar and RPEC members, Dr. Amit Tyagi, Department of Mechanical Engineering and Dr. Kaushik Chattopadhyay, Department of Metallurgical Engineering for their insightful comments and encouragement. I sincerely thank Prof. Santosh Kumar, Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering and all the former heads for providing all the research facilities to successfully accomplish my research in the department. I have deep sense of gratitude to all the faculty members especially, Prof. V. P. Singh, Prof. A.P. Harsha, Prof. Rajesh Kumar, Prof. Sandeep Kumar, Prof. R. K. Gautam, Dr. D. Khan, Dr. Prashant Shukla and Dr. Amit Subhash Shedbale, the Department of Mechanical Engineering, IIT (BHU), Varanasi for their cooperation and inspiration.

I am thankful to all to all my friends: Praveen Kumar Singh, Parshant Kumar, Rabindra Prasad, Ashish Srivastava, Sandeep Rajput, Hari Kishore Kumar and seniors especially Awani Bhushan, Sanjeev Kumar Singh, Sushant Singh, Manvendra Kumar Singh, Ambuj Sharma Avinash Ravi Raja, and Kumar Kaushik Ranjan for their constant encouragement and for being with me in my moments of happiness and troubles at IIT (BHU), Varanasi.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my mother Mrs. Saroj Pareta and father Mr. Pramod Kumar Singh and my wife Mrs. Anjali Singh for their unconditional support, patience and encouragement to pursue my interest. I would also like to thank my sisters Saumya Singh for his consistent support and encouragement throughout this journey.

Dozens of people have helped and taught me immensely at IIT (BHU) Varanasi. I am thankful to all the lab, workshop and office staffs specially Mr. Lalji ji, Mr. Ravi Singh, Mr. Ajay Yadav ji and Akash Mishra ji for their help and encouragement.

The world is going through some unprecedented times as the normal has been upended by the arrival of the deadly coronavirus pandemic. People across the globe are battling with Covid-19. Many who were locked at home like us were doing their part also by helping the people in many ways. But, others like doctors, soldiers, teachers, bank employee, office staff, railway employee, social volunteers etc. who are working outside to fulfil our requirements and taking care of the affected ones by risking their lives. I would like to thank them for their service towards humanity. Also, I would like to express my deepest condolences to those who lost their lives during this pandemic. Hope can always help pull people out of the most difficult of times. It is a powerful force and can prove to be a source of reassurance. Hence, I am immensely optimistic that very soon we will win this battle and lead a happy and fulfilling life ahead.

Last but not the least, I wish to thank my friends and the persons whose names have not been mentioned on this piece of paper for extending their cooperation directly or indirectly.

Ashish Singh Pareta

Contents

<i>Abstract</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>Acknowledgement</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>Contents</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>List of Tables</i>	<i>xv</i>
<i>Abbreviations</i>	<i>xvii</i>
<i>Preface</i>	<i>xix</i>
Chapter 1. Introduction	1
1.1. Composite Constituents	2
1.2. Characteristics of Laminated FRP Composites.....	3
1.3. Construction of Sandwich Composites	7
1.4. Classification of Sandwich Composites.....	8
1.5. Design Principle of Sandwich Structure	9
1.6. Failure of Sandwich Structure.....	13
1.7. Fly Ash as Sustainable Particulate Reinforcement	15
1.8. Scope of the Present Work.....	16
Chapter 2. Literature Review	17
2.1. Surface Modification of Particulate Reinforcement	19
2.2. Influence of Reinforcement on Cellular Morphology.....	22
2.3. Effect of Particulate Size and Shape	25

2.4.	Quasi-Static Indentation.....	29
2.5.	Utilization of FA as a Reinforcement.....	33
2.6.	Motivation and Research Gaps.....	36
2.7.	Research Objectives of the present work.....	37
Chapter 3. Materials and Methods of Characterizing Sandwich Composites		
Components and Panels.....		41
3.1.	Materials.....	41
3.1.1.	Face Sheet Material.....	41
3.1.2.	Foam Core Material.....	45
3.2.	Fabrication of Sandwich Composites.....	48
3.2.1.	Fabrication of FRP Laminated Face Sheets.....	48
3.2.2.	Fabrication of the Neat and FA-PUF Core.....	49
3.2.3.	Fabrication of Sandwich Composite.....	52
3.3.	Physical Characterization.....	52
3.3.1.	Density Measurement of Laminated Face Sheet and PUF Core.....	52
3.3.2.	Scanning Electron Microscopy.....	54
3.4.	Mechanical Characterization.....	54
3.4.1.	Tensile Testing of Face Sheets.....	54
3.4.2.	Compression Testing of Sandwich Core.....	55
3.4.3.	Shear Test of Core.....	56
3.4.4.	Bend Test of Sandwich Composites.....	57
3.4.5.	Quasi-static Indentation Test.....	57
Chapter 4. Characterization of FA Reinforced PU Foam Core Sandwich Composites		
under Bending.....		61
4.1.	Physical Characterization.....	61

4.1.1.	Density of Face Sheet and PUF Core	61
4.1.2.	Particle Size Distribution of Surface Treated Fly Ash.....	63
4.2.	Mechanical Characterization.....	64
4.2.1.	Tensile Test of GFRP and CFRP.....	65
4.2.2.	Shear Test of Polyurethane Foam Core	67
4.2.3.	Bending Test on Sandwich Composite.....	70
4.3.	Scanning Electron Microscope Analysis and Reinforced Mechanism of Fly Ash to PUF Core.....	75
Chapter 5. Compression and Indentation Damage Mechanics of FA Reinforced PU Foam Core		79
5.1.	Mechanical Characterization.....	79
5.1.1.	Compression Testing of PUF Core.....	79
5.1.2.	Quasi-Static Indentation Test	83
5.2.	Cross-section Examination of Damaged PUF Core.....	93
5.3.	SEM Micrograph Study	96
Chapter 6. Indentation Damage Mechanics of FA Reinforced PU Foam Core Sandwich Composites		101
6.1.	Indentation Response of Sandwich Composites	101
6.1.1.	Effect of Indenter's Nose Profile Geometry on Indentation Resistance of Neat PUF GFRP/CFRP Face Sheet Sandwich Composites.....	105
6.1.2.	Effect of Face Sheet Material on Indentation Resistance of Sandwich Composites with respect to each Indenter's Nose Profile Geometry.....	108
6.1.3.	Effect of FA Reinforcement on Indentation Resistance of PUF Core Sandwich Composites.....	111

Chapter 7. Conclusions and Future Scope.....117

7.1. Conclusions117

7.2. Future Scope.....120

References121

List of Publications145

List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Classifications of composites	3
Figure 1.2 Schematic of a symmetric and balanced composite laminate.	4
Figure 1.3 Schematic of fiber orientations in FRP composites.	6
Figure 1.4 Sandwich composite structure.....	8
Figure 1.5 Classification of Sandwich composite	9
Figure 1.6 Design concept of sandwich composite	10
Figure 1.7 Sandwich panels with (a) Corrugated (b) Foam and (c) Honeycomb Core	12
Figure 1.8 Failure modes in sandwich columns according to three types of external loading: a) Delamination failure (peel loading); b) Face yielding failure (tensile loading); c) Euler macro-buckling (compressive loading); d) Core shear macro-buckling (compressive loading) e) face sheet micro-buckling (compressive loading) and f) face sheet wrinkling (compressive loading).....	15
Figure 2.1 The hydrolysis reaction, condensation, hydrogen bonding, and covalent bond formation are the first four main steps in the silane grafting procedure. For the experimental work, various silane coupling agents (SCAs) with various molecular and structural bonds were used. (b) The glass fibre (inorganic matrix) and SCA create hydrogen bonds. (c): During the drying process used in the grafting approach, the hydrogen bond between the glass fibres is further transformed into chemical bonds.	21
Figure 2.2 Fly ash production/utilisation (millions tons per year) in India during 2011 to 2016–17 (first half year) (plots present data from the source: http://cbrienviis.nic.in).	35
Figure 2.3 Utilisation (%) of Fly ash in India during 2011 to 2016–17 (first half year) (plots present data from the source: http://cbrienviis.nic.in).	36
Figure 3.1 Unmodified epoxy resin chain ('n' denotes number of polymerized unit).....	42
Figure 3.2 Tri-ethylene-tetramine (hardener used for epoxy matrix).....	42

Figure 3.3 Epoxy resin (LY 556) and hardener (LY 951)	43
Figure 3.4 Bi-directional plain interwoven glass fibre and carbon fibre	44
Figure 3.5 Traditional PU synthesis by a two-stage process using diisocyanate, polyol, and a low molecular weight chain extender.....	46
Figure 3.6 Small packaging of Polyol and MDI.....	46
Figure 3.7 Micro-sized fly ash particles used as filler in PU foam core.....	48
Figure 3.8 Hand layup technique for the fabrication of GFRP laminate face sheet.	49
Figure 3.9 Steps involved in the surface treatment of the FA.....	50
Figure 3.10 (a) GFRP (b) CFRP specimen for density measurement.....	53
Figure 3.11 PUF specimen for density measurement.	54
Figure 3.12 (a) GFRP tensile test specimen (b) GFRP tensile test held in tensile grips (c) CFRP tensile test specimen (d) CFRP tensile test held in tensile grips.....	55
Figure 3.13 (a) PUF core compression test coupons arranged in increasing wt.% of FA reinforcement neat, 5%, 10%, 15% and 20% respectively (b) PUF specimen under compression test configuration.	56
Figure 3.14 (a) PUF core compression test coupons arranged right to left in increasing wt.% of FA reinforcement neat, 5%, 10%, 15% and 20% respectively (b) Shear test arrangement of Fly ash reinforced core on INSTRON 8801.	56
Figure 3.15 Bend test on (a) PUF core GFRP sandwich composite (b) PUF core CFRP sandwich composite.	57
Figure 3.16 (a) The geometry of three types of indenter and (b) test configuration of indentation test on PUF with hemispherical indenter.	58
Figure 3.17 (a) Test specimen with varying fly ash wt. % to GFRP-PUF and CFRP-PUF sandwich composite and (b) Indentation test configuration on CFRP-PUF sandwich with conical indenter.....	59

Figure 4.1 (a) mass of CFRP specimen in air (b) mass of CFRP specimen immersed in water.....	62
Figure 4.2 SEM image of Fly ash (a) before and (b) after surface treatment with GPTS ...	64
Figure 4.3 particle size distribution of treated fly ash.	64
Figure 4.4 Comparison of average stress-strain of GFRP and CFRP under tensile loading.	66
Figure 4.5 Failure mode of (a) GFRP (b) CFRP specimens under tensile loading.	66
Figure 4.6 Shear stress-strain curve of neat PUF and 15 % of treated and untreated FA-PUF	68
Figure 4.7 SEM of 15% UTFA-PUF specimen (a) SEM image showing agglomeration of FA particles at strut and (b) SEM image showing non-uniform distribution of FA particle in cell wall.....	69
Figure 4.8 (a) Shear stress-strain curve of different weight % of fly ash loaded PUF (b) SGM failure in 10 % FA-PUF core.	70
Figure 4.9 Load- Deflection curve of GFRP sandwich composite under bending.....	71
Figure 4.10 Failure of 10% FA-PUF GFRP composite under bending.....	71
Figure 4.11 Load- Deflection curve of FA-PUF CFRP sandwich composite under bending.	74
Figure 4.12 (a) Shear failure of sandwich composite under bending (b) Debonding of bend specimen.	74
Figure 4.13 SEM images of (a) Neat PUF, (b) 5% FA-PUF, (c) 10% FA-PUF, (d) 15% FA-PUF and (e) 20% FA-PUF.....	77
Figure 4.14 SEM images of fly ash distribution in polyurethane foam core cell (a) 5% FA-PUF, (b) 10% FA-PUF, (c) 15% FA-PUF and (d) 20% FA-PUF.	77
Figure 5.1 Stress-strain curve of neat and reinforced FA-PUF under compression.	80

Figure 5.2 Elastic to plastic behavior of neat and reinforced FA-PUF core under compression. 82

Figure 5.3 Experimental setup and deformation incurred on Neat PUF by the flat-circular, hemispherical and conical indenter..... 83

Figure 5.4 Load-Indentation curve behavior of Neat PUF core under flat-circular, hemispherical and conical indenter tip shape. 84

Figure 5.5 Deformation characteristics of the foam core for (a) flat-circular (b) hemispherical, and (c) conical indenter. 87

Figure 5.6 Load-Indentation curve of neat and reinforced FA-PUF core under the flat-circular indenter. 88

Figure 5.7 The first and second peak load and corresponding indentation depth for flat-circular indenter to varying wt. % FA-PUF..... 89

Figure 5.8 Load-Indentation curve of neat and reinforced FA-PUF core under the hemispherical indenter. 91

Figure 5.9 Load-Indentation curve of neat and reinforced FA-PUF core under the conical indenter..... 92

Figure 5.10 Cross-section of indented (a) neat PUF, (b) 5%, (c) 10%, (d) 15% and (e) 20% FA-PUF under flat-circular indenter..... 94

Figure 5.11 Cross-section of indented (a) neat PUF, (b) 5%, (c) 10%, (d) 15% and (e) 20% FA-PUF under hemispherical indenter. 94

Figure 5.12 Cross-section of indented (a) neat PUF, (b) 5%, (c) 10%, (d) 15% and (e) 20% FA-PUF under conical indenter. 95

Figure 5.13 SEM image of a cross-sectional cut of 20 wt. % FA-PUF under the flat-circular indenter. 97

Figure 5.14 SEM image of a cross-sectional cut of 20wt. % FA-PUF under the hemispherical indenter.	98
Figure 5.15 SEM image of a cross-sectional cut of 20wt. % FA-PUF under the conical indenter.	99
Figure 6.1 Experimental setup and deformation incurred on Neat PUF GFRP by the flat-circular, hemispherical and conical indenter.	103
Figure 6.2 Experimental setup and deformation incurred on Neat PUF CFRP by the flat-circular, hemispherical and conical indenter.	104
Figure 6.3 Load-Indentation behaviour of (a) GFRP and (b) CFRP sandwich composites under flat-circular, hemispherical and conical indenter nose profile geometry.	105
Figure 6.4 Load-Indentation curve behavior of Neat PUF GFRP and CFRP sandwich panel under flat-circular indenter.	108
Figure 6.5 Load-Indentation curve behavior of Neat PUF GFRP and CFRP sandwich panel under hemispherical indenter.	109
Figure 6.6 Load-Indentation curve behavior of Neat PUF GFRP and CFRP sandwich panel under conical indenter.	111
Figure 6.7 Load-Indentation curve of neat and reinforced FA-PUF core (a) GFRP and (b) CFRP sandwich composite under the flat-circular indenter.	111
Figure 6.8 Load-Indentation curve of neat and reinforced FA-PUF core (a) GFRP and (b) CFRP sandwich composite under the hemispherical indenter.	113
Figure 6.9 Load-Indentation curve of neat and reinforced FA-PUF core (a) GFRP and (b) CFRP sandwich composite under the conical indenter.	114

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List of Tables

Table 1.1 An example of structural efficiency of sandwich panels in terms of weight.....	12
Table 3.1 Physical and Mechanical properties of epoxy	43
Table 3.2 Properties of MDI and Polyol.....	47
Table 3.3 Fly ash composition.....	47
Table 3.4 Nose profile geometry of the indenters.	59
Table 4.1 Density calculation of GFRP and CFRP laminate face sheet.....	62
Table 4.2 The calculated density for varying wt. % of FA to PUF.	63
Table 4.3 Different weight % of FA reinforced PUF and its shear strength and failure mode.....	70
Table 4.4 Variation of Peak values of bending load and corresponding deflection of GFRP and CFRP sandwich composites with weight % fly ash inclusion.	75
Table 4.5 Average cell size of different weight % FA-PUF.....	78
Table 5.1 Neat and FA- PUF's properties under compression.....	81
Table 5.2 Peak values of the neat and FA-PUF core under flat-circular indentation.	90

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Abbreviations

FA	Fly Ash
PU	Polyurethane
PUF	Polyurethane Foam
GFRP	Glass Fiber Reinforced Polymer
CFRP	Carbon Fiber Reinforced Polymer
MDI	Methylene Diphenyl Diisocyanate
SEM	Scanning Electron Microscope
QSI	Quasi-Static Indentation
ASTM	American Society for Testing and Materials

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Preface

Sandwich structured composites are a special class of composite materials are popular due to high specific strength and bending stiffness. Light in weight and buoyancy effect of these materials makes them especially suitable for use in aeronautical, space and marine applications. Sandwich panels are composite structural elements, consisting of two thin, stiff and strong face sheets separated by a core relatively thick layer of low-density and less stiff material. The face sheets are commonly made of steel, aluminium or laminate composite and the core material may be foam, honeycomb and balsa wood. The face sheet and the core material are bonded together with an adhesive to facilitate the load transfer mechanisms between the components. This particular layered composition creates a structural element with both high bending stiffness and bending strength. In order to bring solutions to the mass manufacturing, many developments and studies during these last years, were optimization of the mechanical performance/ density ratio. Indeed, the general concept of optimisation sandwich structures has been investigated and developed by many researchers. This study was undertaken with the same objective, but by having a strategy of optimization being focused more particularly on core material. Our step is to reconsider in its entirety core material and to propose a new concept of foam core which utilize Fly Ash (FA) as a practical particulate reinforcement which is an industrial waste from the power plant industry. This study aims to develop the new route of manufacturing the FA reinforced foam core with superior mechanical properties. The enhancement in properties has been corroborated by the different investigations under taken in the thesis work. First The bare core (neat and FA PUF) is tested under compression, shear and indentation loading. These foam cores are tested for its superior mechanical properties and change incurred to deformation mechanism after reinforcement. Then, these cores are combined with GFRP and CFRP face sheet. The sandwich composites are tested under 3-point bend test and quasi-static indentation (Flat-

circular, hemispherical and conical). The variation in bending stiffness and indentation resistance with FA wt. % reinforcement to foam core sandwich composites have been studied elaborately.

Organization of thesis-: This thesis has been divided into seven chapters

Chapter-1 provides a brief introduction about composites and their applications. Design principle of the sandwich composite has been discussed in detail. Potential of core as a tool to increase the bending stiffness of the sandwich composite. This chapter also include failure mechanism of the sandwich composite. This chapter concludes with the aim and objective of the present investigation.

Chapter-2 presents how to couple inorganics filler material to organic matrix, particulate reinforcement affects the cell morphology, the effect of particulate shape and size on reinforcement characteristics. It also covers how the FA can be utilised in different ways and applications. This chapter discusses about the quasi-static indentation as a substitute of low velocity indentation to study the deformation sequence which equip the design engineers to design a high-performance sandwich structure.

Chapter-3 deals with details of materials used for the present investigation and experimental procedure of fabrication of sandwich components and sandwich composites. The experimental details of the physical and mechanical testing which are conducted according to ASTM standard of face sheet, foam core and sandwich panel has been included here. The SEM characterization to study the cellular morphology and the damage mechanism has been included.

Chapter-4 presents detailed discussion on the characterization of face sheet, core and sandwich composite. FA reinforced PUF core has been tested for its superior mechanical properties under shear test, GFRP and CFRP face sheets are tested for its tensile strength, and FA-PUF core GFRP/CFRP sandwich composite are tested under 3-point bend test. In this chapter it has been established that the FA inclusion to PUF core incurred positive mechanical properties when optimised.

Chapter-5 presents exclusive physical and mechanical testing of the neat and FA-PUF core. Effect of FA inclusion on PUF core density and compressive properties has been evaluated. The evaluation of indentation resistance of the PUF core with FA reinforcement is covered in this chapter. The effect of indenter's nose tip geometry on indentation resistance of the PUF core is also comprised here.

Chapter-6 focuses on the sandwich structure's responsiveness while considering the impact of GFRP and CFRP face sheets under quasi-static indentation. Fly ash loaded PUF core sandwich composites are investigated comprehensively. This study also investigates the response of sandwich composite changes with the change in nose profile geometry.

Chapter 7: presents the concluding remarks and future scope.

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