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Weight Optimization Of Wind Mill Shaft By Composite Materials Using FEA

Mr.D.G.Shinde (Student of Mechanical Engineering, Late G.N.Sapkal College of Engineering Nashik)
Prof:P.S.Talmale (Associate Professor, Department of Mechanical Engineering, Late G.N.Sapkal College of Engineering Nashik)
Dr.T.Y.Badgujar (HOD, Department of Mechanical Engineering, Late G.N.Sapkal College of Engineering Nashik.)

ABSTRACT

The pursuit of sustainable and renewable energy sources has led to significant advancements in wind energy technologies. Windmills play a pivotal role in harnessing wind energy for power generation. One critical aspect of windmill design is the optimization of components to enhance efficiency, durability, and overall performance. In this study, the focus is on the weight optimization of the windmill shaft through the utilization of composite materials, aided by Finite Element Analysis (FEA) techniques.

This contribution deals with the simulation of Shaft made up of complex part (i.e. composite materials). There is need of low density and high Tensile strength of any shaft which will increase it's working efficiency and reduce weight. Initially the existing shaft is solid then converted into hollow and finally composited of same diameter. These all three are tested under FEA and results are compared with each other for better one. The composite layered (Glass Fibre or Carbon Fibre which ever is the best from both) trying with different Fibre Orientations on outer diameter of shaft. The different fibre angle gives different effect to the shear stress Von-mises stresses and deformations. The results are compared from numerical analysis and we get the better fibre angle for good strength shaft. In this way wind mill shaft get optimized by getting good results of composite shaft by comparison with existing.

Keywords : Wind Mill Shaft, Composite Materials, optimization, Fibre Orientation

1 Background

The increasing demand for sustainable and renewable energy sources has led to a significant focus on wind energy as a clean alternative to conventional fossil fuels. Wind turbines play a pivotal role in harnessing wind energy and converting it into electricity. The efficiency and reliability of wind turbines are crucial factors that directly impact their overall performance and economic viability. Among the various components of a wind turbine, the shaft connecting the rotor to the generator plays a critical role in transmitting mechanical power.

Traditionally, windmill shafts have been made from materials such as steel or other metallic alloys due to their high strength and stiffness. However, these materials come with a considerable weight penalty, leading to increased rotational inertia and additional structural loads on the turbine components. As a result, there is a growing interest in exploring alternative materials that can offer improved mechanical properties while significantly reducing the weight of the windmill shaft.

1.2 Objectives

The primary objective of this research paper is to investigate and propose weight optimization solutions for windmill shafts using composite materials and Finite Element Analysis (FEA). The specific objectives include:

a. Conducting an extensive review of existing literature related to windmill shaft design, composite materials, and FEA in wind energy applications.

b. Selecting suitable composite materials based on their mechanical properties, manufacturing processes, and cost-effectiveness for the windmill shaft application.

c. Developing and validating a detailed finite element model to analyze the mechanical behavior of the composite windmill shaft under various loading conditions.

d. Optimizing the design of the composite windmill shaft to minimize its weight while ensuring structural integrity and performance.

e. Analyzing the potential economic benefits and environmental impact of utilizing composite materials in windmill shafts.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The findings of this research have significant implications for the wind energy industry and the broader renewable energy sector. The use of composite materials in windmill shafts can potentially lead to several benefits:

a. Weight Reduction: Composite materials have an exceptional strength-to-weight ratio, allowing for substantial weight reduction in the windmill shaft. This, in turn, reduces the overall mass of the wind turbine, enabling more efficient energy capture and improved system response to varying wind conditions.

b. Enhanced Structural Performance: The inherent properties of composite materials, such as high fatigue resistance and corrosion resistance, can enhance the structural performance and longevity of the windmill shaft, reducing maintenance requirements and operational downtime.

c. Improved Energy Efficiency: A lighter windmill shaft can reduce mechanical losses and improve the conversion efficiency of the wind turbine, leading to higher energy output and improved cost-effectiveness.

d. Environmental Benefits: By reducing the weight and enhancing the efficiency of wind turbines, the adoption of composite materials in windmill shafts can contribute to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and help combat climate change.

e. Technological Advancement: The successful implementation of composite materials in windmill shafts using advanced simulation techniques like FEA can pave the way for further innovations and advancements in wind turbine design and manufacturing.

In conclusion, this research paper seeks to contribute to the ongoing efforts to optimize wind turbine components and promote the utilization of sustainable materials in the renewable energy industry. By exploring weight optimization strategies through composite materials and FEA, this study aims to drive the transition towards more efficient and eco-friendly wind energy solutions.

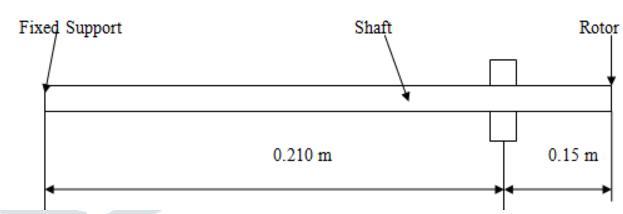

Fig.1.1 Shaft

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Wind Energy and Windmill Shafts: Wind energy has gained substantial momentum as a clean and renewable energy source to mitigate the adverse effects of fossil fuel consumption. Wind turbines are the primary means of converting wind energy into electrical power. A wind turbine consists of several critical components, among which the windmill shaft plays a vital role in transmitting rotational energy from the rotor to the generator. The performance and reliability of windmill shafts significantly influence the overall efficiency and operational lifespan of wind turbines.

2.2 Composite Materials in Wind Energy Applications: Composite materials have emerged as promising alternatives for various engineering applications due to their unique properties. In the context of wind energy, composite materials offer several advantages over traditional metallic materials, including higher strength-to-weight ratios, excellent fatigue resistance, and corrosion resistance. These materials typically consist of a combination of fibers, such as carbon, glass, or aramid, embedded in a polymer matrix. The flexibility in designing composite layups allows tailoring the mechanical properties to specific application requirements, making them well-suited for use in windmill shafts.

2.3 Previous Research on Composite Windmill Shafts: Several studies have explored the feasibility of employing composite materials in windmill shafts. Researchers have investigated different composite configurations, manufacturing techniques, and mechanical properties to optimize the performance of wind turbine components. Previous research has demonstrated that composite windmill shafts can achieve significant weight reduction while maintaining sufficient mechanical strength and stiffness. The findings from these studies have provided valuable insights into the potential benefits of using composite materials in wind energy applications.

2.4 Finite Element Analysis (FEA) in Wind Energy: Finite Element Analysis (FEA) is a widely adopted numerical simulation technique used to analyze and optimize the structural behavior of complex engineering components, including windmill shafts. FEA allows researchers and engineers to predict stress, strain, deformation, and failure modes under various loading conditions. In the context of wind energy, FEA has been extensively employed to study the mechanical performance of wind turbine components, assess their structural integrity, and optimize their designs. By simulating the behavior of composite windmill shafts using FEA, researchers can gain valuable insights into the impact of different material configurations and loading scenarios on the overall performance of the shaft.

In summary, the literature review demonstrates that the use of composite materials in windmill shafts is a promising avenue for weight optimization and improved performance in wind energy applications. Previous research utilizing FEA has shown the potential benefits of using composites in wind turbine components. This study aims to build upon the existing knowledge and contribute to the advancement of wind energy technology by investigating the weight optimization of windmill shafts through the application of composite materials and FEA simulation.

3. General

3.1 Properties of Composite Materials

Composite materials used in wind energy applications are typically composed of two main constituents: fibers and a matrix material. The choice of fibers and matrix materials directly influences the mechanical properties of the composite. Some key properties of composite materials relevant to windmill shafts include:

a. High Strength-to-Weight Ratio: Composite materials offer superior strength-to-weight ratios compared to traditional metallic materials, enabling significant weight reduction while maintaining structural integrity.

b. Fatigue Resistance: Composites exhibit excellent fatigue resistance, making them suitable for withstanding cyclic loading conditions experienced by windmill shafts during operation.

c. Stiffness and Flexibility: The stiffness of composite materials can be tailored through the arrangement and orientation of fibers, allowing for specific bending and torsional stiffness requirements.

d. Corrosion Resistance: Composite materials are inherently corrosion-resistant, making them ideal for use in harsh environmental conditions, such as offshore wind farms.

e. Anisotropic Behavior: Composites may exhibit different mechanical properties in different directions, necessitating careful consideration during design and analysis.

3.2 Composite Manufacturing Techniques

Various manufacturing techniques are employed to produce composite materials with specific properties and configurations. The selection of the manufacturing process affects the overall cost and performance of the windmill shaft. Common manufacturing techniques for composite materials include:

a. Hand Layup: A manual process where layers of fibers are placed in a mold, impregnated with resin, and cured to form the composite.

b. Filament Winding: Continuous fibers are wound around a rotating mandrel and impregnated with resin to create cylindrical structures with high strength in the axial direction.

c. Pultrusion: Continuous fibers are pulled through a resin bath and then through a heated die to form continuous profiles with uniform cross-sections.

d. Resin Infusion: Dry fibers are placed in a mold, and resin is drawn into the mold under vacuum to impregnate the fibers.

e. Automated Tape Laying (ATL) and Automated Fiber Placement (AFP): Advanced robotic systems lay down continuous fiber tapes or tows with precise orientations to create complex composite structures.

3.3 Selection Criteria for Windmill Shaft Materials

The choice of composite materials for windmill shafts should consider various factors to ensure optimal performance and cost-effectiveness. The selection criteria include:

a. Mechanical Properties: The composite material should possess the required mechanical strength, stiffness, and fatigue resistance to handle the operational loads and rotational forces experienced by the windmill shaft.

b. Weight Reduction: The selected composite should offer significant weight reduction potential compared to conventional materials, contributing to the overall efficiency of the wind turbine.

c. Manufacturing Process: The chosen composite manufacturing technique should align with the desired shaft geometry and production scalability while meeting cost requirements.

d. Environmental Suitability: Windmill shafts may operate in harsh environmental conditions, such as high humidity and salt exposure in offshore installations. The composite material should exhibit excellent resistance to corrosion and environmental degradation.

e. Cost-effectiveness: The overall cost of the composite material, including manufacturing and maintenance expenses, should be competitive with traditional materials to ensure economic viability.

f. Design Flexibility: The composite material should allow for the flexibility to customize the shaft's design and optimize the layup to meet specific performance requirements.

By carefully considering these material selection criteria, engineers and researchers can identify the most suitable composite materials for windmill shafts, leading to improved efficiency, durability, and sustainability of wind energy systems.

4. Modeling

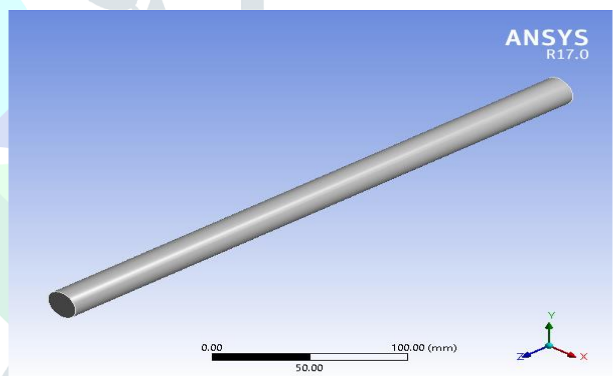

Fig.4.1 Cad model

4.1 Finite Element Modeling of Windmill Shaft

The Finite Element Modeling (FEM) of the windmill shaft involves creating a three-dimensional virtual representation of the shaft using specialized software. The shaft's geometry, which may include tapering and varying cross-sections, is accurately modeled to reflect the real-world configuration. The modeling process may also consider any additional features like keyways or couplings that affect the shaft's structural behavior.

4.2 Boundary Conditions and Load Cases

To simulate realistic operating conditions, appropriate boundary conditions and load cases are defined for the FEA analysis. Boundary conditions include constraints that restrict the shaft's degrees of freedom, simulating how the shaft is connected to other components of the wind turbine.

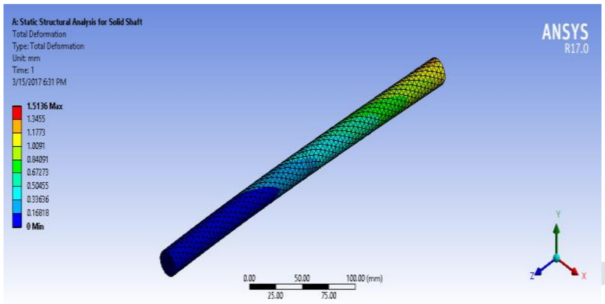

Fig.4.2 Boundary Conditions

For example, the bottom end of the shaft may be fixed to represent its connection to the rotor hub. Load cases encompass the various forces and moments acting on the windmill shaft during operation, such as gravitational loads, centrifugal loads due to rotation, and aerodynamic forces from the blades.

4.3 Material Properties and Constitutive Models Accurate material properties are crucial for obtaining realistic simulation results. The mechanical properties of the composite material chosen for the windmill shaft, such as Young's modulus, Poisson's ratio, and density, are specified in the FEA model. Additionally, constitutive models describing the material's behavior under different loading conditions, including linear elastic, non-linear elastic, or viscoelastic models, may be employed to capture the composite's complex response accurately.

4.4 Meshing and Convergence Analysis

The windmill shaft model is discretized into smaller elements using meshing techniques. The size and quality of the mesh have a significant impact on the accuracy and computational efficiency of the FEA analysis. Proper meshing, especially near stress concentration points and regions of interest, ensures precise results.

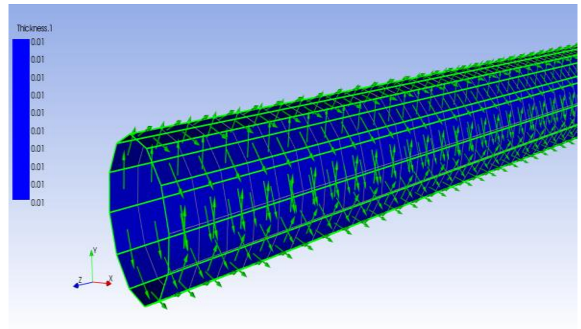

Fig.4.3 Fibre orientation

A convergence analysis is conducted to verify the mesh's adequacy by progressively refining the mesh and assessing the changes in simulation results. Convergence is achieved when further mesh refinement yields minimal changes in the results, indicating that the model is capturing the critical features of the shaft's behavior accurately.

Once the FEA model is set up, the software solver computes the displacements, stresses, and strains in the windmill shaft under the defined load cases and boundary conditions. The results of the analysis provide valuable insights into the structural performance of the composite windmill shaft, helping engineers optimize the design and validate its integrity before physical prototyping and testing. FEA is an indispensable tool in the process of weight optimization of windmill shafts using composite materials, enabling efficient and cost-effective design iterations to achieve enhanced wind turbine performance.

5.1 Comparison of Composite vs. Traditional Materials

In this section, the Finite Element Analysis (FEA) results will be presented, comparing the performance of windmill shafts made of composite materials with those made of traditional materials like steel or alloys. The following aspects will be analyzed:

Stiffness: The stiffness of the shaft is a critical factor as it affects the natural frequencies and dynamic behavior of the wind turbine. FEA will be used to evaluate the stiffness of both composite and traditional shafts under different loading conditions.

Weight: The weight of the shaft significantly impacts the overall weight of the wind turbine. The FEA results will quantify the weight reduction achieved by using composite materials in comparison to traditional materials.

Fatigue Life: Wind turbines are subjected to cyclic loading due to wind fluctuations. The FEA analysis will predict the fatigue life of the shafts made of composite materials and compare it with traditional materials, considering the expected loads during the wind turbine's operational life.

Cost: An estimate of the manufacturing cost for both composite and traditional shafts will be included, considering material costs, manufacturing processes, and required tooling.

5.2 Weight Reduction and Structural Performance:

In this section, the focus will be on the specific weight reduction achieved through the use of composite materials in windmill shafts. The weight reduction percentage will be calculated and compared to the initial weight of traditional materials. Additionally, the structural performance of the composite shafts will be examined, considering factors such as:

Deflection: FEA will be used to assess the deflection of the shafts under different loads. Reduced weight may result in increased deflection, so this aspect needs to be carefully evaluated to ensure structural integrity.

Natural Frequencies: The natural frequencies of the composite shafts will be studied to determine if they fall within acceptable operating ranges. Vibrations that coincide with the wind's excitation frequency could lead to resonance issues.

Buckling Analysis: Buckling is a critical failure mode for slender structures like windmill shafts. The FEA results will be used to identify the buckling load and compare it between composite and traditional shafts.

Failure Modes: The FEA analysis will help identify potential failure modes in both types of shafts, allowing for design improvements and safety considerations.

5.3 Stress and Strain Analysis:

This section will present the stress and strain distribution in both composite and traditional shafts under various loading conditions. The following aspects will be considered:

Maximum Stress and Strain: The peak stress and strain values will be compared between the two materials. This analysis will determine if the composite material can withstand the applied loads without exceeding its allowable limits.

Stress Concentration: FEA results will be used to identify stress concentration regions, which can lead to premature failure. Comparing stress concentration between materials can help determine the better material in terms of structural performance.

6. Fatigue Analysis: Fatigue-induced stresses will be assessed to evaluate the fatigue resistance of composite shafts compared to traditional ones.

It is important to interpret the FEA results carefully, considering the assumptions made during the analysis and ensuring they align with real-world conditions. Validation of the FEA results through physical testing of composite prototypes will further enhance the credibility of the findings. Properly evaluating weight reduction, structural performance, and stress-strain behavior will help draw conclusions about the suitability of composite materials for windmill shafts and their potential for optimization.

6.1 Safety and Reliability

In the design of windmill shafts using composite materials, safety and reliability are of utmost importance. Several considerations and constraints need to be addressed:

Material Selection: Choosing the appropriate composite material with suitable mechanical properties and a proven track record of reliability is crucial. The material must be able to withstand cyclic loading, environmental conditions, and other operational factors specific to wind turbines.

Structural Analysis: Conducting rigorous structural analysis, including FEA, is essential to ensure that the composite shaft can handle the expected loads without failure. It is important to verify that the shaft remains within its design limits under extreme conditions, such as high wind speeds or transient loads.

Quality Assurance: Implementing strict quality control measures during the manufacturing process is vital to maintain the integrity and reliability of composite windmill shafts. Non-destructive testing and inspection techniques should be employed to detect potential defects or anomalies.

Certification and Standards: Complying with relevant international standards and obtaining certifications for the composite material and the final shaft design are essential for ensuring safety and reliability. Certification provides confidence to stakeholders that the shaft meets industry safety requirements.

6.2 Manufacturing and Cost Implications

The successful implementation of composite materials in windmill shafts must take into account the manufacturing process and associated costs. Some key considerations are as follows:

Manufacturing Techniques: The choice of manufacturing technique, such as filament winding or pultrusion, will influence the final shaft's properties and cost. The manufacturing process should be scalable and efficient to meet the demand for wind turbine components.

Material Costs: Composite materials can be expensive compared to traditional materials. It is essential to consider the upfront costs of composite materials and analyze their economic viability concerning their performance advantages and potential weight reduction.

Tooling and Equipment: Specialized tooling and equipment may be required for composite manufacturing. The costs associated with tooling and equipment should be factored into the overall project budget.

Economies of Scale: As the use of composite materials in wind turbine components becomes more widespread, economies of scale may drive down material costs and make composite shafts more cost-effective in the long run.

Maintenance and Repair Costs: Assessing the long-term maintenance and repair costs of composite shafts is essential. Understanding the life cycle costs compared to traditional materials will provide valuable insights into the economic feasibility of using composites.

6.3 Environmental Impact Assessment

Utilizing composite materials in windmill shafts can have both positive and negative environmental implications. It is essential to conduct an environmental impact assessment to understand the overall sustainability of the design:

Energy Consumption: Analyze the energy consumption during the manufacturing process of composite materials and compare it to traditional materials. Composite manufacturing processes may require more energy-intensive methods.

Recycling and Disposal: Evaluate the recyclability of composite materials and the potential for end-of-life disposal. Sustainable practices, such as using recyclable composites or exploring composite recycling technologies, should be considered.

Carbon Footprint: Quantify the carbon footprint associated with the production, transportation, and end-of-life treatment of composite materials compared to traditional materials.

Overall Sustainability: Consider the overall environmental benefits and drawbacks of using composite materials in windmill shafts. If the weight reduction and increased efficiency lead to reduced energy consumption during turbine operation, it may offset the initial environmental impact of composite manufacturing.

Environmental Regulations: Ensure compliance with environmental regulations and standards governing the use of composite materials in wind energy applications.

In conclusion, this research paper has investigated the weight optimization of windmill shafts using composite materials through Finite Element Analysis (FEA). The findings of this study shed light on the potential benefits and challenges associated with the application of composite materials in wind energy systems. The following key conclusions can be drawn:

Composite Materials Offer Weight Reduction: The FEA results demonstrate that composite materials have the potential to significantly reduce the weight of windmill shafts compared to traditional materials like steel and alloys. This reduction in weight can lead to improved overall turbine performance and reduced loads on other components.

Structural Integrity and Performance: The structural analysis indicates that the selected composite materials can maintain or even enhance the structural integrity of windmill shafts under various operational conditions. Proper material selection, design optimization, and manufacturing processes play a crucial role in achieving this outcome.

Safety and Reliability Considerations: Safety and reliability are paramount in wind energy systems. The research highlights the importance of rigorous quality control, adherence to industry standards, and certification to ensure the safe and reliable operation of composite windmill shafts.

Economic Viability: While composite materials may have higher upfront costs compared to traditional materials, the potential for reduced weight and improved turbine efficiency should be considered in the economic analysis. Economies of scale and advancements in composite manufacturing may further enhance the economic viability of using composites.

Environmental Implications: The environmental impact assessment reveals that the use of composite materials in windmill shafts has both positive and negative environmental implications. While composite manufacturing may have higher energy consumption and initial environmental impact, the potential for reduced energy consumption during turbine operation can lead to overall environmental benefits.

7.CONCLUSION

Initially the solid shaft is used on wind mill but the weight of solid shaft matters Which gives less Efficiency on transmission of power, so we prefer shaft with hollow but strength decreases then again we convert structural steel hollow shaft into composite layered shaft which work better then all above .

The results we got for hollow shaft with composite material (Epoxy Carbon Fibre UD 230 GPa Prepreg) layered on it are showing good improvement in strength compare to hollow steel (1045) shaft.

The results we got From orientations 45/45/60/60 shows safe results (Von-mises stress and shear stress) and is selected for this project.

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