Strength characteristics of light weight concrete blocks using mineral admixtures

P Bhuvaneshwari*, U Priyadharshini, S Gurucharan and B Mithunram
School of Civil Engineering, SASTRA University, Thanjavur – 613401. India.

Email: bhuvaneswari@civil.sastra.edu

Abstract. This paper presents an experimental study to investigate the characteristics of light weight concrete blocks. Cement was partially replaced with mineral admixtures like Fly ash (FA), limestone powder waste (LPW), Rice husk ash (RHA), sugarcane fiber waste (SCW) and Chrysopogonzizanioides (CZ). The maximum replacement level achieved was 25% by weight of cement and sand. Total of 56 cubes (150 mm x 150 mm x 150 mm) and 18 cylinders (100mmф and 50mm depth) were cast. The specimens being (FA, RHA, SCW, LPW, CZ, (FA-RHA), (FA-LPW), (FA-CZ), (LPW-CZ), (FA-SCW), (RHA-SCW)). Among the different combination, FA, FA-SCW, CZ, FA-CZ showed enhanced strength and durability, apart from achieving less density.

Keywords: Mineral admixtures, light weight concrete, wet density, dry density, compressive strength, water absorption

1. Introduction

In order to reduce environmental effects, pollution caused in manufacturing of cement and also to achieve light weight building blocks, different admixtures were used as partial replacement of cement. Earlier researchers suggested replacing various mineral admixtures to design a structural lightweight high strength concrete (SLWHSC). They also found that silica fume produce good compressive strength and light weight concrete. It was found that structural lightweight concrete can reduce the dead weight and increase the strength of the structural components [1]. The strength and durability of lightweight concrete was concentrated elaborately [2]. Strength characteristics were concentrated for different replacement level of light weight cinder aggregate based cement concrete [3]. Development of high strength was concentrated on scoria aggregate based light weight concrete [4].

The strength of light weight was least sensitive to lack of initial curing [5]. Partial replacement of cement with various mineral admixtures for producing a lightweight concrete block as a building material was investigated. The maximum replacement level achieved was 25% of weight of cement [6]. Sludge ash aggregates could be used to develop lightweight concrete. It was found to have less thermal conductivity and good fire resistance [7]. The ductility of pumice lightweight aggregate concrete replaced with steel and various fibers was studied [8]. It was found that apart from reduction in dead load, ductility was improved in all modes of loading. Flexural behaviour of lightweight concrete panel
with GFRP bars was concentrated [9]. It was confirmed that light weight concrete performed well under flexural loading.

1.1 Research significance
The objective is the partial replacement of cement with Fly ash (FA), lime stone powder waste (LPW), Rice husk ash (RHA), sugarcane fibre waste (SCW) and Chrysopogon zizanioides (CZ) to achieve light weight building blocks. The replacement would result in reduction of the dead load of the building. Parametric analysis of strength and durability characteristics of light weight concrete blocks, with that of normal concrete blocks was carried out.

2. Materials and methods
2.1 Materials used
The following materials were used to study the strength characteristics of the light weight concrete. Cement used for the research work was ordinary Portland cement of 53 grade confirming [10]. Granular river sand passing through 4.75mm sieve (grading zone III) with specific gravity 2.6 was used as fine aggregate confirming [11]. Class F fly ash with specific gravity 2.3 was obtained from thermal power plant. Rice husk ash burned in suspension at a temperature 700ºC with specific gravity 2.3 and bulk density 98 kg/m³ was used. The sugarcane waste fibers were dried and soaked in a 10% NaOH (Sodium Hydroxide) solution for about 2 to 6 hours with a temperature of about 60-70°C and are made to dry. Treated fibers were cut into pieces of 3cm length. Similar treatment was followed for Chrysopogon zizanioides. Lime stone powder waste with specific gravity of 2.61 and density of 2.45(g/cm³) was used. The mix proportion and the specimen details were shown in table1 and table 2.

| Specimen   | OPC | GRS | FA  | LPW | RHA | SCW | CZ |
|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| Control    | 50  | 50  | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0  |
| FA         | 25  | 50  | 25  | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0  |
| LPW        | 25  | 50  | 0   | 25  | 0   | 0   | 0  |
| CZ         | 46.5| 50  | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 3.5|
| RHA        | 25  | 50  | 0   | 0   | 25  | 0   | 0  |
| SCW        | 46.5| 50  | 0   | 0   | 0   | 3.5 | 0  |
| FA-RHA     | 16.7| 50  | 16.7| 0   | 16.7| 0   | 0  |
| FA-SCW     | 29.8| 25  | 16.7| 0   | 0   | 3.5 | 0  |
| RHA-SCW    | 29.8| 50  | 0   | 0   | 16.7| 3.5 | 0  |
| FA-LPW     | 25  | 25  | 25  | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0  |
| FA-CZ      | 29.8| 50  | 16.7| 0   | 0   | 0   | 3.5|
| LPW-CZ     | 29.8| 50  | 0   | 16.7| 0   | 0   | 3.5|

Table 1. Mix proportion of light weight concrete

| Specimen details (mm) | Density | Water absorption | Sorptivity | Compressive strength |
|-----------------------|---------|------------------|-------------|----------------------|
| Cube 150x150x150      | 12      | 12               | 0           | 12                   |
| Cylinder 100ϕ x 50 H  | 0       | 0                | 18          | 0                    |

Table 2. Specimen details
2.2 Methods
The consistency and setting time tests were carried out for Ordinary Portland cement according to [12]. The consistency value was 33% and initial setting time was 33 min. Fresh density as per [13] and dry density as per [14] were calculated for each combinations. Water absorption test was conducted to find the amount of water absorbed. After 24 hours of curing, the cubes were heated in oven, cooled, weighted and kept for water absorption. Compressive strength test was conducted as per [15]. From the figure 1(a) and figure 1(b) shows the cubes subjected to curing and testing. Sorptivity measures the rate of ingress of water through capillary action. Specimens for sorptivity were prepared in accordance with [16] (figure 2).

3. Results and discussion
3.1 Bulk density
Replacement of cement and sand with 25% of mineral admixtures showed the value of wet and dry weight of cast specimens as shown in the table 3. Compared to control specimens, reduction in fresh density achieved was 17.89%, 20.75%, 24.61%, 24.10%, 19.03%, 22.9%, 24.10%, 30.05%, 14.28%, 23.07% and 30.62% respectively. Corresponding reduction in dry density was 8.76%, 15.53%, 9.94%, 27.63%, 10.76%, 22.11%, 25.62%, 31.90%, 4.32%, 11.64% and 18.43% respectively. Similar results were reported [6]. Bulk densities for the specimens are compared in figure 3.
Table 3. Wet weight and dry weight of cube specimen

| S.No. | Specimen    | Area (mm²) | Wet weight (kg) | Dry weight (kg) |
|-------|-------------|------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1     | Control     | 150 x 150  | 8.960           | 7.960           |
| 2     | FA          | 150 x 150  | 7.60            | 7.320           |
| 3     | LPW         | 150 x 150  | 7.420           | 6.890           |
| 4     | CZ          | 150 x 150  | 7.190           | 7.240           |
| 5     | RHA         | 150 x 150  | 6.800           | 5.790           |
| 6     | SCW         | 150 x 150  | 8.240           | 7.006           |
| 7     | FA-RHA      | 150 x 150  | 6.900           | 6.200           |
| 8     | FA-SCW      | 150 x 150  | 6.840           | 5.920           |
| 9     | RHA - SCW   | 150 x 150  | 6.240           | 5.420           |
| 10    | FA - LPW    | 150 x 150  | 7.840           | 7.630           |
| 11    | FA - CZ     | 150 x 150  | 7.280           | 7.130           |
| 12    | LPW - CZ    | 150 x 150  | 6.86            | 6.721           |

Figure 4. Wet and dry density of specimens

3.2 Water absorption

Percentage of water absorption are shown in figure 4. As compared to control specimen, RHA, (FA - RHA), (FA - SCW), (RHA-SCW) achieved the highest percentage of water absorption. As compared to control specimens, FA, LPW, CZ, SCW, (FA-LPW), (FA-CZ), (LPW-CZ) showed decrease in percentage of water absorption. It has been compared from the earlier studies, percentage increase in water absorption was gradual by using various admixtures [6].
3.3 Sorptivity
The sorptivity in specimens were carried out in accordance with [16]. Behaviour of FA, CZ, (FA-CZ), (FA-SCW) was similar to control specimen. As compared to control specimen, light weight concrete specimens RHA, SCW, (FA-RHA), (RHA-SCW) showed higher value of sorptivity. Similar behaviour was noticed in light weight concrete specimens [17].

Table 4. Sorptivity for the specimens

| √t   | C  | FA | FA-CZ | CZ | RHA | SCW | RHA-FA | RHA-SCW | FA-SCW |
|------|----|----|-------|----|-----|-----|--------|---------|--------|
| 0    | 0  | 0  | 0     | 0  | 0   | 0   | 0      | 0       | 0      |
| 3.166| 0.032 | 0.032 | 0.030 | 0.098 | 0.415 | 0.42 | 0.6358 | 0.382   | 0.254  |
| 5.472| 0.017 | 0.017 | 0.018 | 0.01 | 0.411 | 0.45 | 0.7643 | 0.382   | 0.382  |
| 7.745| 0.012 | 0.012 | 0.013 | 0.012 | 0.309 | 0.25 | 1.0191 | 0.509   | 0.382  |
| 13.41| 0.007 | 0.007 | 0.007 | 0.007 | 0.508 | 0.65 | 1.1464 | 0.636   | 0.382  |
| 15.49| 0.006 | 0.006 | 0.006 | 0.006 | 1.006 | 0.94 | 1.273  | 0.764   | 0.509  |
| 17.32| 0.005 | 0.005 | 0.103 | 0.005 | 1.106 | 1.28 | 1.5286 | 0.891   | 0.509  |
| 18.97| 0.005 | 0.005 | 0.103 | 0.005 | 1.205 | 1.20 | 1.5286 | 1.019   | 0.509  |
Figure 6 (a) Control

Figure 6 (b) Fly ash

Figure 6 (c) FA-CZ

Figure 6 (d) CZ

Figure 6 (e) RHA

Figure 6 (f) SCW
Compressive test was achieved in CTM of loading capacity 3000 kN. After 28 days of moisture curing, the specimens were surface dried and tested to failure. Comparison of compressive strength are listed in the table 6, percentage of difference in strength are shown in the figure 7.

Table 5. Comparison of compressive strength

| S.No | Specimen | Area (mm²) | Compressive load (kN) | Compressive stress (N/mm²) |
|------|----------|------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1    | Control  | 150 x 150  | 562                    | 24.99                     |
| 2    | FA       | 150 x 150  | 597                    | 26.53                     |
| 3    | LPW      | 150 x 150  | 405                    | 18.01                     |
| 4    | CZ       | 150 x 150  | 545                    | 24.20                     |
| 5    | RHA      | 150 x 150  | 578                    | 25.68                     |
| 6    | SCW      | 150 x 150  | 552                    | 24.53                     |
| 7    | RHA-FA   | 150 x 150  | 375                    | 16.66                     |
| 8    | RHA-SCW  | 150 x 150  | 397                    | 17.64                     |
| 9    | FA-SCW   | 150 x 150  | 425                    | 18.88                     |
| 10   | FA-LPW   | 150 x 150  | 582                    | 25.86                     |
| 11   | FA-CZ    | 150 x 150  | 573                    | 25.46                     |
| 12   | LPW-CZ   | 150 x 150  | 520                    | 23.11                     |

The influence of various mineral admixtures on compressive strength of concrete specimens was concentrated [1]. Light density for concrete have achieved without compromising the compressive strength.
From the comparison it was inferred that LPW and LPW-CZ showed decrease in compressive strength. Compared to control specimen, the other combinations FA, CZ, RHA, SCW, RHA-FA, RHA-SCW, FA-SCW, FA-LPW and FA-CZ showed enhanced results for compressive strength.

4. Conclusion
Mineral admixtures were used as partial replacement for cement to achieve light weight concrete blocks and conclusion were arrived

- FA showed less reduction in bulk density without considerable reduction in compressive strength.
- Replacement with LPW showed better reduction in density but failed to achieve the strength.
- FA and (FA-SCW) showed less reduction in the density without substantial reduction in the compressive strength.
- The results observed that (FA-LPW) specimens had higher compressive strength compared to the control specimen.
- Replacement with CZ resulted in better reduction in water absorption and density of the sample. Sample achieved good strength.
- By the addition of RHA, water absorption and bulk density of the samples considerably increased.
- Combination of (FA-CZ) sample gave reduction in density and water absorption. The samples achieve good strength.
- Combination of (LPW-CZ) sample gave reduction in density and water absorption. The samples achieved good strength.
- Sorptivity of CZ gradually decreased the sorptivity value as compared to control specimens.
- Sorptivity of FA, FA-CZ sample achieved lowest value of sorptivity as compared to control specimens.
- Study for strength and durability showed that cement replaced with FA and (FA-SCW) were effective compared to other combinations. As compared to all other specimens (FA-CZ) and (LPW-CZ) achieved light weight concrete blocks. These blocks showed good compressive strength and also performed better under durability conditions.
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