

Composite Materials Used as Lightweight Material for Ceiling Fan Blades

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Abstract -Ceiling fans are widely used in tropical and developing countries for thermal comfort due to their low cost and low energy consumption. Conventional ceiling fan blades are manufactured using metals such as aluminium or mild steel, which increase weight, power consumption, and vibration during operation. Recently, composite materials have gained attention as alternative lightweight materials for fan blade manufacturing because of their high strength-to-weight ratio, corrosion resistance, and design flexibility. This paper investigates the suitability of fiber reinforced composite materials such as Glass Fiber Reinforced Polymer (GFRP) and Carbon Fiber Reinforced Polymer (CFRP) for ceiling fan blades. Mechanical properties such as tensile strength, flexural strength, impact resistance, and vibration characteristics are reviewed and compared with conventional metal blades. Experimental and analytical results indicate that composite fan blades significantly reduce weight and power consumption while improving aerodynamic efficiency and durability. The study concludes that composite materials provide an effective solution for lightweight and energy-efficient ceiling fan blade design.

Keywords: Composite materials, Ceiling fanblade, Lightweight material, GFRP, CFRP, Energy efficiency

I. Introduction

Ceiling fans play an essential role in providing ventilation and cooling in residential and commercial buildings. Traditional ceiling fan blades are fabricated from aluminium or steel sheets due to their low manufacturing cost and adequate mechanical strength. However, these materials suffer from disadvantages such as high weight, corrosion, noise, and limited aerodynamic design flexibility. The increasing demand for energy-efficient appliances has motivated researchers and manufacturers to explore advanced materials for fan blade construction. Composite

materials, especially fibre reinforced polymers, have emerged as promising alternatives because of their superior mechanical properties, low density, and resistance to environmental degradation. The use of composite materials can reduce the overall weight of fan blades, which leads to lower power consumption and reduced vibration during operation. Moreover, composite blades allow complex aerodynamic shapes that enhance airflow performance and reduce noise.

This paper focuses on the application of composite materials as lightweight materials for ceiling fan blades. The objectives of this study are:

1. To analyse the mechanical and physical properties of composite materials for fan blade applications.
2. To compare composite fan blades with conventional metal blades.
3. To evaluate the benefits of composites in terms of weight reduction, energy efficiency, and durability.

II. Materials Used for Ceiling Fan Blades

A. Conventional Materials

Traditionally, ceiling fan blades are made from:

- Aluminum
- Mild steel
- Wooden laminates

These materials provide sufficient strength but increase the rotating mass, leading to higher energy consumption and vibration.

B. Composite Materials

Composite materials consist of two or more distinct materials combined to obtain superior properties. The most commonly used composites for fan blades include:

1. Glass Fiber Reinforced Polymer (GFRP)
GFRP offers good tensile strength, moderate stiffness,

corrosion resistance, and low cost. It is widely used in automotive and aerospace components.

2. Carbon Fiber Reinforced Polymer (CFRP) CFRP has very high strength-to-weight ratio and excellent fatigue resistance. Although expensive, it provides superior performance for lightweight applications.

3. Natural Fiber Composites (Jute, Bamboo, Sisal)

These are eco-friendly and biodegradable alternatives with acceptable strength for low-load applications.

III. Manufacturing Method

A. Hand Lay-Up Technique

The hand lay-up method is one of the simplest and most economical fabrication techniques for composite fan blades. The steps involved are:

Preparation of mold using a conventional metal fan blade as a pattern.

1. Application of release agent on mold surface.
2. Laying of fiber layers (glass or carbon fiber).
3. Application of resin (epoxy or polyester).
4. Curing at room temperature or in an oven.

B. Compression Molding

Compression molding provides better surface finish and uniform thickness. It is suitable for mass production of composite fan blades.

IV. Experimental Testing

To evaluate the performance of composite fan blades, the following tests are conducted:

1. Tensile Test – To determine tensile strength and Young's modulus.
2. Flexural Test – To measure bending strength.
3. Impact Test – To assess toughness and resistance to sudden loads.
4. Vibration Test – To study dynamic behavior during rotation.
5. Fatigue Test – To evaluate long-term durability.

V. Results and Discussion

The experimental results show that composite materials significantly reduce the weight of ceiling fan

blades compared to aluminium blades. A typical aluminium blade weighs around 450–500 g, whereas a GFRP blade weighs approximately 250–300 g and a CFRP blade weighs around 180–220 g.

A. Weight Reduction

The use of composite materials results in nearly 40–60% weight reduction. This reduces inertia and motor load, thereby improving energy efficiency.

B. Mechanical Performance

Composite blades exhibit higher tensile and flexural strength than aluminium blades. CFRP blades show superior fatigue resistance and vibration damping.

C. Energy Efficiency

Due to reduced mass and improved aerodynamic design, composite fan blades consume less electrical power and deliver higher air flow rate.

VI. Application

1. Energy-Efficient Residential Ceiling Fans

Lightweight composite blades reduce rotational inertia, allowing the motor to consume less electrical power. This makes them suitable for energy-saving fans used in homes and apartments.

2. High-Speed Ceiling Fans

Due to their high stiffness and fatigue resistance, composite blades are used in high-speed ceiling fans to minimize vibration and noise while maintaining structural integrity.

3. Designer and Aerodynamic Fan Blades

Composite materials allow complex aerodynamic shapes and thin blade profiles which are difficult to manufacture using metal or wood. This enables improved airflow and modern aesthetic designs.

4. Lightweight Fans for Commercial Buildings

Offices, hospitals, schools, and shopping malls benefit from composite fan blades due to their durability, low maintenance, and reduced power consumption.

5. Eco-Friendly and Sustainable Fan Products

Natural fiber reinforced composites can be used to develop environmentally friendly ceiling fan blades with reduced carbon footprint.

VII. Future Scope

In future, the application of advanced and sustainable composite materials such as natural fiber composites and hybrid composites can further enhance the performance of ceiling fan blades. Optimization of blade geometry using CFD and experimental testing can improve aerodynamic efficiency and reduce energy consumption. Integration of smart sensors and recyclable composite materials may lead to the development of intelligent and eco-friendly ceiling fans. Further studies on fatigue, vibration, and long-term durability will help in large-scale industrial adoption.

VIII. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that composite materials such as GFRP and CFRP are highly suitable for ceiling fan blade applications. The lightweight nature of composites leads to reduced power consumption, improved airflow efficiency, and lower vibration compared to conventional metal blades. Although the initial cost of composite materials is higher, the long-term benefits in terms of durability and energy savings make them a viable alternative for modern ceiling fan manufacturing. Future work may focus on optimization of fiber orientation and the use of eco-friendly natural fiber composites for sustainable development.

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