

# **STUDIES ON SOLAR AIR HEATERS FOR CROP DRYING**

**BY**

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**THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE  
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, DELHI  
IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**



**CENTRE OF ENERGY STUDIES  
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, DELHI  
AUGUST, 1983**

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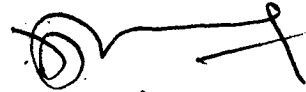
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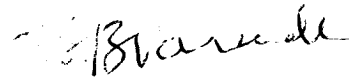
**DEDICATED TO MY  
PARENTS  
WIFE, CHILDREN  
BROTHER AND SISTERS**

C E R T I F I C A T E

It is certified that the thesis entitled, "Studies on Solar Air Heaters for Crop Drying", has been completed by Mr. R.B. Mahajan under our supervision. It is original in nature and we have permitted the candidate to submit it for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Solar Energy.



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is my great pleasure and privilege to express profound indebtedness to Professor H.P. Garg, Centre of Energy Studies, I.I.T., Delhi for his expert and encouraging guidance, untiring efforts, valuable suggestions, informal and cordial attitude and whole hearted support to carry out this research work. Grateful thanks are also due to Dr. S.B. Varad, Professor and Head, Faculty of Agriculture, UAFRI, for timely help, supervising the work and encouragement throughout the research work.

I also acknowledge my gratitude to Dr. V.S. Khosla, Ex-Vice-Chancellor, Shri V.V. Chhabal, Vice-Chancellor, Dr. N.L. Shale, Dean and Director of Instructions, M.A.U. Pashani, Prof. M.S. Sedha, Ex. Deputy Director, I.I.T. Delhi, Prof. K.L. Chopra, Head, Centre of Energy Studies and Prof. S.S. Mathur for their encouragement, advice and timely help at every stage of the research work.

My hearty thanks are also extended to Prof. S.P. Sarker, Prof. B.C. Raychaudhuri, Dr. S.C. Mukherjee, Dr. N.D. Kishik, Dr. N.K. Banerji, Dr. G.N. Tewari, Dr. T.C. Kundal, Dr. Ram Chandra, Dr. J.K. Sharma, Dr. A.K. Seth, Dr. S.C. Kishik and other staff members of the Centre of Energy Studies for their active interest and support.

I also wish to express my thanks to Dr. A.K. Shrivastava for his help during the various stages of my research work. My grateful thanks are extended to Dr. V.K. Sharma for encouragement, helpful suggestions, discussions which helped me in completing this research work.

Thanks are due to Dr. B. Sandhyapathy, Dr. A.S. Shukla, Dr. Sant Ram, Mr. S.N. Garg, Dr. J.C. Joshi, Mr. Indrajit,

**Mrs. Nrinshikoon and other faculty members and research scholars of the Centre of Energy Studies, I.I.T. Delhi.**

**I wish to express my thanks for the cooperation extended by Dr. K.B. Chavan, Shri B.M. Naik, Prof. S.L. Rapt, Dr. S.A. Kulkarni, Dr. H.S. Acharya, Dr. D.R. Kulkarni, Prof. S.S. Ganjal, Shri K.B. Chavan, Shri S. Numan, Shri K.C. Jain, Shri S.A. Joshi, Shri Utgikar, Shri V.K. Jain, Shri Jagdval and other friends.**

**I also wish to appreciate the cooperation extended by the technical and administrative staff of the Centre for Energy Studies, Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, as well as Maharashtra Agricultural University Parbhani.**

**Thanks are also due to the authorities of ICAR for funding the Research Project which initiated me for this work.**

**I have no befitting words to express my deep sentiment towards my beloved parents, wife Mrs. Mandakini and children for their endless tolerance and moral support during the course of this work.**

**Finally I am grateful to Shri D.R. Joshi for typing this manuscript efficiently and Miss Shashi Sharma for preparing the tracings.**

**Last but not the least I am very much thankful to the authorities of Maharashtra Agricultural University, Parbhani (Maharashtra) for giving me an opportunity to complete this research work.**

*Kalajan*  
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NOMENCLATURE

<b>A</b>	Collector area ( $m^2$ )
<b>B</b>	Depth of the air heater (m)
<b><math>C_a</math></b>	Specific heat of air, ( $KJ/Kg^{\circ}C$ )
<b><math>C_g</math></b>	Specific heat of glass, ( $KJ/Kg^{\circ}C$ ).
<b><math>C_p</math></b>	Specific heat of metallic plate, ( $KJ/Kg^{\circ}C$ )
<b>D</b>	Hydraulic diameter of the heater (m)
<b><math>F_R</math></b>	Heat removal efficiency factor
<b><math>F_p</math></b>	Plate efficiency factor
<b>G</b>	Air mass flow rate per unit area ( $Kg/m^2-hr.$ )
<b>Gr.</b>	<del>Grashof</del> number
<b>Pr</b>	Prandtl number
<b>g</b>	Acceleration due to gravity, ( $m/sec^2$ )
<b><math>h_{agg}</math></b>	Convective heat transfer coefficient between stagnant air and the glass cover, ( $W/m^2^{\circ}C$ ).
<b><math>h_{cfg}</math></b>	Convective heat transfer coefficient between fluid and glass cover, ( $W/m^2^{\circ}C$ ).
<b><math>h_{cpf}</math></b>	Convective heat transfer coefficient between metallic plate and the fluid, ( $W/m^2^{\circ}C$ ).
<b><math>h_{r_{g_1, g_2}}</math></b>	Radiative heat transfer coefficient between two glass covers, $g_1$ and $g_2$ , ( $W/m^2^{\circ}C$ ).
<b><math>h_{r_{gs}}</math></b>	Radiative heat transfer coefficient between glass cover and the sky, ( $W/m^2^{\circ}C$ ).
<b><math>h_{r_{pf}}</math></b>	Radiative heat transfer coefficient between the metallic plate and fluid, ( $W/m^2^{\circ}C$ ).
<b><math>h_{r_{pg}}</math></b>	Radiative heat transfer coefficient between metallic plate and the glass cover, ( $W/m^2^{\circ}C$ ).
<b><math>h_{cgw}</math></b>	Convective heat transfer coefficient between glass cover and the wind ( $W/m^2^{\circ}C$ ).

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$h_{\text{rad}12}$	Radiative heat transfer coefficient between the metallic plate $P_1$ and $P_2$ ( $\text{W/m}^2 \text{ } ^\circ\text{C}$ ).
$I(t)$	Solar intensity incident on the glass cover at time $(t)$ at an inclination of $45^\circ$ , ( $\text{W/m}^2$ ).
$I_n$	Amplitude of $n$ th harmonic of $I(t)$ , ( $\text{W/m}^2$ ).
$K_p$	Thermal conductivity of the metallic plate ( $\text{W/m } ^\circ\text{C}$ ).
$L$	Length of the metallic plate (i.e. the absorbing plate), (m).
$n$	Number of harmonics
$m_f$	Mass of fluid (air), ( $\text{Kg/m}^3$ )
$m_g$	Mass of glass cover ( $\text{Kg/m}^3$ )
$m_p$	Mass of the absorbing metallic plate ( $\text{Kg}$ )
$Nu$	Nusselt number
$P$	Wetted Perimeter
$Q_u$	Amount of useful heat collected ( $\text{W/m}^2$ ) or ( $\text{Cal/cm}^2\text{-day}$ ).
$Q_{\text{conv}}$	Amount of heat lost by convection, ( $\text{W/m}^2$ )
$Q_{\text{cond}}$	Amount of heat lost by conduction ( $\text{W/m}^2$ )
$Q_{\text{rad}}$	Amount of heat lost by radiation ( $\text{W/m}^2$ )
$Q_t$	Total amount of heat lost by thermal losses, ( $\text{W/m}^2$ ).
$Re$	Reynold number
$T_A(t)$	Ambient temperature at time $t$ ( $^\circ\text{C}$ )
$T_{An}$	Amplitude of the $n$ th harmonic of $T_A(t)$ , ( $^\circ\text{C}$ ),
$T_f$	fluid temperature, ( $^\circ\text{C}$ )
$T_g$	Temperature of glass cover, ( $^\circ\text{C}$ )
$T_{\text{in}}$	Inlet air temperature, ( $^\circ\text{C}$ )
$T_{\text{out}}$	Outlet air temperature, ( $^\circ\text{C}$ )
$T_{\text{exp}}$	Experimental temperature ( $^\circ\text{C}$ )

$T_p$	Metallic plate temperature ( $^{\circ}\text{C}$ )
$T_s$	Sky temperature ( $^{\circ}\text{C}$ )
$T_w$	Temperature of the wind blowing ( $^{\circ}\text{C}$ )
$T(x,t)$	Temperature distribution in the air heating system at a point specified by $x$ at time $t$ ( $^{\circ}\text{C}$ )
$t$	Time (hr.)
$U_L$	Overall heat loss coefficient ( $\text{W/m}^2\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ )
$U_R$	Overall heat loss coefficient from the back of the air heat ( $\text{W/m}^2\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ ).
$v$	Wind velocity (m/sec.)
$v$	Velocity of exit air (m/sec.)
$x$	Position coordinate (m).

Greek Symbols

$L_0$	Fraction of solar radiation absorbed by the glass plate.
$L_2$	Fraction of solar radiation absorbed by the lower glass plate.
$L_p$	Fraction of solar radiation absorbed by the metallic plate.
	Volume coefficient of expansion ( $^{\circ}\text{C}^{-1}$ )
$\tau_g$	Transmittance of the glass cover.

- $\delta$  Thickness of the absorbing plate of the air heater (m)
- $\rho$  Density of the fluid (air) ( $\text{Kg/m}^3$ ).
- $\mu$  Kinematic viscosity ( $\text{Kg/m-h}$ )
- $\sigma$  Stefan's constant ( $\text{W/m}^2 \text{ } ^\circ\text{C}^{-4}$ )
- $\omega$  Angular frequency.
- $\eta_i$  Instantaneous efficiency
- $\eta_{av}$  Average efficiency
- $\epsilon$  Emissivity of the metallic plate.

## S U M M A R Y

The main objective of the investigations carried out in this thesis is to study the effect of various parameters on the performance of different configurations of conventional, Matrix and Augmented Integral Rock System (AIRS) solar energy collector. Analytical and experimental studies for identification of efficient configurations are the main features of this work.

The transient analysis of matrix type solar air heater has been attempted in order to determine the dependence of the transient behaviour on various design parameters. The various parameters like mass flow rate, plate length, matrix thickness etc. are studied in detail. Moreover, experiments were also conducted to validate the predicted exit fluid temperature and to find out the economy of the system under investigation to be used mainly for agricultural requirements.

The performance results of matrix type solar air heater connected in series with an solar dehydrator unit are also presented. The drying ratio, rehydration ratio, culinary and organoleptic characteristics for some horticultural crops like lady's finger and Fenugreek are also studied.

An exhaustive experimental study carried out on Augmented Integral Rock System is attempted for the first time, to show the versatility of the system for energy storage purposes along with fabrication details. Experiments were



conducted for varying mass flow rate, varying depth of the rock bed and number of glazing. The results obtained from thermal decay of the energy during off sun hours, stored in an integrated rock bed collecting and storage system while using a night insulation cover in addition to glass covers are also discussed in detail.

A self consistent periodic analysis of double glazed flat plate solar air heater connected in series with integrated rock bed collector cum storage unit has been developed. The theory of a double glazed flat plate solar air heater is also developed. The aim of this study was to improve the performance of solar air heater by using more number of glass covers and also to compare the experimental and predicted exit fluid temperature from the model developed, so as to confirm its applicability for obtaining higher temperature which can be stored in the integrated rock bed system. This system will provide continuous low grade heat during its operation as well as during off sun hours in the late evening and early morning.

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