

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION .....	iii
CERTIFICATE .....	v
DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE .....	vii
COPYRIGHT TRANSFER CERTIFICATE.....	ix
Acknowledgment .....	xi
Table of Contents.....	xiii
List of Figures .....	xvii
List of Tables .....	xxiii
Preface .....	xxv
Chapter 1 Introduction and Literature Review.....	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.2 LITERATURE SURVEY .....	5
1.2.1 Synthesis of polymer nanocomposites (PNC).....	5
1.2.2 Electrical Characterizations.....	7
1.2.3 Mechanical properties .....	18
1.2.4 Thermal conductivity .....	20
1.3 Problem Formulation .....	23
1.4 Organization of Thesis .....	25
Chapter 2 Material Description and Sample Preparation .....	27
2.1 Material used.....	27
2.1.1 Host material .....	27
2.1.2 Filler material.....	28
2.1.3 Coupling Agent.....	29
2.1.4 Curing agent.....	30
2.2 Sample Preparation .....	31
2.2.1 Synthesis of pure epoxy samples.....	31
2.2.2 Synthesis of nanocomposites with untreated nanofillers .....	31
2.2.3 Synthesis of Nanocomposites with surface-treated nanoparticles.....	32
2.3 Dispersion of nanofillers .....	34
2.4 Summary .....	39
Chapter 3 Experimental Techniques for Material Characterization.....	41
3.1 Thermal Characterization .....	41
3.1.1 Thermo gravimetric analysis (TGA).....	41
3.1.2 Differential scanning calorimetry (DSC).....	42

3.1.3	Thermal conductivity measurements.....	44
3.2	Electrical Characterization.....	45
3.2.1	AC dielectric strength measurement.....	45
3.2.2	DC conductivity.....	47
3.2.3	Dielectric Spectroscopy .....	51
3.3	Chemical Characterization.....	56
3.3.1	Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR).....	56
3.4	Structural Characterization .....	58
3.4.1	X-Ray Diffraction (XRD) Analysis.....	58
3.5	Summary.....	60
Chapter 4	Exploring the Interphase and its Impact on Electro-Thermal Properties.....	61
4.1	Introduction.....	61
4.2	Experimental.....	62
4.2.1	Sample Preparation and Dispersion Analysis .....	62
4.2.2	X-Ray Diffraction (XRD) Analysis.....	64
4.2.3	Dielectric Properties Measurements.....	66
4.2.4	Thermogravimetric analysis (TGA) .....	69
4.2.5	Differential scanning calorimetry (DSC) .....	70
4.3	GENESIS OF INTERPHASE AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH MATERIAL PROPERTIES .....	71
4.4	Summary.....	83
Chapter 5	Estimating Relative Permittivity and Size of Interphase .....	85
5.1	Introduction.....	85
5.2	Methodology .....	85
5.2.1	Building model geometry and selection of unit cell.....	86
5.2.2	Applying physics and boundary conditions .....	88
5.2.3	Assignment of material properties.....	89
5.2.4	Calculation of effective permittivity .....	89
5.3	Validation of Finite Element Analysis .....	92
5.4	Determination of Interphase Permittivity using Bisection Method Algorithm.....	96
5.4.1	Bisection method.....	96
5.4.2	Application of bisection method for estimation of interphase permittivity .....	97
5.5	Discussion on important findings .....	101
5.6	Summary.....	106
Chapter 6	Estimating electrical and thermal conductivity of interphase .....	107
6.1	Introduction.....	107
6.2	Estimation of dc conductivity of interphase.....	108

6.2.1	Methodology.....	108
6.3	Estimation of thermal conductivity of interphase.....	115
6.3.1	Methodology.....	115
6.4	Result and Discussion .....	128
6.5	Summary.....	132
Chapter 7	Interphase and its effect on optimizing filler concentrations for improved dielectric and thermal properties.....	133
7.1	Introduction .....	133
7.2	Methodology .....	133
7.2.1	Estimation of effective electrical conductivity .....	134
7.2.2	Estimation of effective thermal conductivity .....	135
7.2.3	Experimental validation .....	136
7.2.4	Optimizing filler concentrations and role of interphase.....	137
7.3	Summary.....	139
Chapter 8	Conclusion and Future Scope .....	141
8.1	Summary of Important Findings .....	141
8.2	Future Scope .....	143
References	.....	145
A.	Appendix: Publication in referred and peer-reviewed Journals.....	155



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 (a) Porcelain insulator, (b) glass insulator, (c) polymer insulator.....	2
Figure 1.2 Insulator strings in transmission line.....	2
Figure 1.3 Schematic showing various applications of polymeric insulation in electrical power components .....	4
Figure 1.4 Schematic showing the effect of particle size on interfacial region.....	5
Figure 1.5 Basic process for degradation of insulation due to partial discharge.....	14
Figure 1.6 Mechanism illustrating erosion behavior in (a) neat polymer, (b) micro composites, and (c) nanocomposites .....	17
Figure 2.1 Chemical structure of uncured epoxy .....	28
Figure 2.2 Epoxy resin (LY556) and hardener (HY951) supplied from Huntsman.....	28
Figure 2.3 Aluminum oxide (Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub> ) nanopowder supplied from Sigma Aldrich.....	29
Figure 2.4 Chemical structure of coupling agent .....	30
Figure 2.5 3-Glycidoxypropyltrimethoxysilane (GPS) supplied from Sigma Aldrich	30
Figure 2.6 Chemical structure of hardener .....	30
Figure 2.7 Schematic diagram for synthesis of epoxy alumina nanocomposite .....	33
Figure 2.8 Apparatus used for synthesis of epoxy alumina nanocomposite (a) Weighing machine, (b) Ultra-sonicator (c) Magnetic stirrer with hot plate, and (d) Vacuum pump. ....	34
Figure 2.9 ZEISS SEM apparatus at CIF, IIT (BHU) .....	35

Figure 2.10	Schematic showing particle vol.% within sampling square of different length.....	37
Figure 2.11	Filler particles of 50 nm diameter and with a concentration of 1 vol.% (a) uniformly distributed (b) agglomerated .....	37
Figure 2.12	Variance ( $\sigma^2$ ) vs. window length (L) for dispersion in Figures 2.11.....	38
Figure 3.1	TGA-50 (Shimadzu) apparatus at CIF, IIT (BHU).....	42
Figure 3.2	DSC-60 Plus (Shimadzu) apparatus at CIF, IIT (BHU) .....	44
Figure 3.3	TPS sensor sandwiched between samples .....	45
Figure 3.4	Schematic for the measurement of short term AC dielectric strength .....	46
Figure 3.5	Experimental setup for the measurement of AC dielectric strength .....	46
Figure 3.6	Three electrodes arrangement for measurement of DC conductivity .....	48
Figure 3.7	Schematics of three-electrode system for measurement of DC conductivity .....	48
Figure 3.8	Experimental Setup for the measurement of DC conductivity .....	49
Figure 3.9	Schematics of a typical polarization-depolarization current waveform .....	50
Figure 3.10	Polarization phenomena as a function of frequency .....	54
Figure 3.11	Experimental setup of Dielectric Spectroscopy .....	55
Figure 3.12	Dielectric sample and electrode assembly .....	55
Figure 3.13	Schematics of dielectric spectroscopic measurements .....	56
Figure 3.14	FTIR (Nicolet IS5 model) apparatus at CIF, IIT (BHU) .....	58

Figure 3.15	XRD (Rigaku smart lab 9kW) apparatus at CIF, IIT (BHU).....	60
Figure 4.1	SEM images of nanocomposites (a) with untreated nanofillers (b) with surface treated nanofillers.....	62
Figure 4.2	Digitized images indicating center coordinates of nanoparticles (a) with untreated nanofillers (b) with surface treated nanofillers.....	63
Figure 4.3	XRD pattern of: (a) epoxy (b) alumina nanoparticle (c) epoxy alumina nanocomposites .....	65
Figure 4.4	Weibull probability plot for the short-term AC dielectric strength of epoxy and nanocomposites.....	66
Figure 4.5	Polarization current at an applied electric field of 2 kV/mm .....	67
Figure 4.6	Complex relative permittivity (a) real part ( $\epsilon_r'$ ) (b) imaginary part ( $\epsilon_r''$ )....	68
Figure 4.7	TGA plots for epoxy and nanocomposites.....	69
Figure 4.8	DSC graph of Nanocomposites.....	70
Figure 4.9	Flow diagram on curing process of epoxy resin .....	73
Figure 4.10	FTIR spectra (a) uncured epoxy (b) hardener (c) cured epoxy.....	74
Figure 4.11	Chemical structure and reactive functional groups of GPS .....	76
Figure 4.12	Schematic diagram to illustrate surface functionalization of alumina nanoparticles.....	77
Figure 4.13	FTIR spectra of (a) as received nanofillers (b) GPS (c) surface treated nanofillers .....	78

Figure 4.14	Electric potential and field distribution with needle-plane geometry (a) electric potential (b) electric field (c) electric field around needle tip (magnified view)	81
Figure 4.15	Time to failure (in Hrs.) during voltage endurance test.....	82
Figure 4.16	Barrier effect (a) pure epoxy (b) nanocomposites with untreated nanofillers (c) nanocomposites with surface treated nanofillers .....	83
Figure 5.1	Flow diagram for performing numerical simulation using FEM.....	86
Figure 5.2	Highlighted region in a simple cubic unit cell (a) nanoparticle (b) interphase (c) base polymer .....	87
Figure 5.3	Plots from simulation studies (a) electric field intensity (E), (b) displacement field (D).....	91
Figure 5.4	Capacitor with two different dielectric materials.....	94
Figure 5.5	Electric field distribution in two layer dielectric system .....	95
Figure 5.6	Bisection method converge at $f(x) = 0$ .....	97
Figure 5.7	Flowchart to calculate permittivity of the interphase .....	100
Figure 5.8	Estimated interphase permittivity and interphase thickness required get the solution converged. ....	103
Figure 5.9	Relative permittivity of nanocomposite and interphase at power frequency 50 Hz corresponding to interphase thickness. ....	104
Figure 5.10	Interphase permittivity obtained thorough the simulation model and measured permittivity of nanocomposites sample (a) interphase thickness of 50 nm (b) interphase thickness of 100 nm. ....	104



Figure 5.11 Interphase (a) highlighted region in unit cell (b) computed interphase volume fraction for different interphase thicknesses.....	105
Figure 6.1 Flow diagram for performing finite element analysis.....	108
Figure 6.2 Randomly distributed multi-particle model .....	109
Figure 6.3 Flowchart to illustrate building of model geometry.....	110
Figure 6.4 Potential, electric field and current density distribution with the nanodielectrics .....	112
Figure 6.5 Flowchart to estimate the dc conductivity of the interphase.....	114
Figure 6.6 Neat epoxy and nanocomposite samples for thermal conductivity measurement.....	116
Figure 6.7 TPS 500 instrument in mechanical engineering department IIT (BHU) ..	117
Figure 6.8 TPS sensor sandwiched between samples.....	118
Figure 6.9 Model geometry considered for FEA and analytical study (a) 3-D view (b) 2-D view .....	121
Figure 6.10 Heat transfer through different parts of the model.....	122
Figure 6.11 Flowchart to estimate the thermal conductivity of the interphase .....	127
Figure 6.12 Thermal conductivity of nanocomposite sample (measured value) and simulated value for a two-phase model .....	129
Figure 6.13 Phonon scattering phenomena in a polymer. ....	131
Figure 6.14 Phonon transport phenomena through aligned polymers chains in interphase.....	131

Figure 7.1 Epoxy matrix containing filler nanoparticles.....	134
Figure 7.2 Computed effective DC conductivity .....	135
Figure 7.3 Computed effective thermal conductivity.....	136
Figure 7.4 Interphase volume fraction vs. filler concentrations characteristics at different interphase thicknesses.....	139

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1	Polymer insulation weight advantage over porcelain insulation (Courtesy- Hubbell Power Systems) .....	2
Table 1.2	Comparison between porcelain and polymer for 10Miles, 345 kV, 250 Strings of Insulators (Courtesy- Hubbell Power Systems).....	3
Table 2.1	Quantification of particle dispersion in Figure 2.11.....	38
Table 4.1	Quantification of nano-filler dispersion in nanocomposites .....	64
Table 4.2	Weibull parameters ( $\alpha$ and $\beta$ ).....	66
Table 4.3	Measured DC conductivity at an applied electric field of 2 kV/mm.....	68
Table 4.4	Measured relative permittivity and loss tangent ( $\tan\delta$ ) at 50Hz.....	69
Table 4.5	Degradation temperature of pure epoxy and nanocomposites .....	70
Table 4.6	Glass transition temperature ( $T_g$ ) data of pure epoxy and Nanocomposites	71
Table 5.1	List of symbols or notations associated with unit cell.....	88
Table 5.2	Comparison of analytical and numerically computed values.....	95
Table 5.3	List of variables used in the flowchart .....	99
Table 6.1	Experimental values of thermal conductivity of specimens.....	118
Table 6.2	Material properties of different constituents in the numerical model .....	120
Table 7.1	Effective dc conductivity and thermal conductivity of nanocomposites obtained from experimental and simulation studies.....	137