International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research (IJFMR)
E-ISSN: 2582-2160 ● Website: www.ijfmr.com ● Email: editor@ijfmr.com

A Study of Porous Activated Carbon Anodes for High-Performance Lithium-Ion Batteries

Shweta Kaushal

CSIR-National Physical Laboratory, New Delhi- 110012) & Assistant Professor, Department of Physics
Shri Sat Jinda Kalyana College, Kalanaur Kalan- 124113, Rohtak, Haryana

Abstract:
This research paper explores the intricate realm of porous activated carbon anodes for high-performance lithium-ion batteries, responding to the escalating demand for advanced energy storage systems. The study begins by delving into various synthesis methods, including physical and chemical activation, and hybrid approaches, aiming to optimize porosity and surface chemistry. Detailed investigations into structural characteristics encompass surface area, pore distribution, morphology, and surface chemistry. Advanced microscopy techniques and characterization tools provide insights into the complex interplay between structural features and electrochemical performance.
Moving beyond the laboratory, the paper explores potential applications of porous activated carbon anodes. In electric vehicles, these anodes demonstrate promise in enhancing energy and power density, critical factors for the widespread adoption of electric transportation. For portable electronic devices, the lightweight nature and improved safety profile make them an attractive choice. Additionally, the study assesses the feasibility of integrating porous activated carbon anodes in grid-scale energy storage, contributing to the stability and reliability of renewable energy integration.
Environmental considerations are addressed, evaluating the sustainability and recyclability of porous activated carbon anodes. The paper concludes by summarizing key findings, emphasizing the significance of porous activated carbon in advancing lithium-ion battery technology, and proposing future research directions to overcome current challenges. The extensive array of references underscores the interdisciplinary nature of the research, incorporating a diverse range of sources to provide a comprehensive overview of the field.

Keywords: Battery Technology, Morphology, Microscopy, Porous, Activated, Renewable.

1. Introduction:

As the world transitions towards sustainable energy solutions, lithium-ion batteries (LIBs) play a pivotal role in powering electric vehicles, renewable energy storage, and portable electronics. Traditional anode materials, such as graphite, face limitations in terms of capacity, cycling stability, and rate capability. Porous activated carbon, derived from diverse precursors, presents an innovative solution to address these challenges due to its high surface area, tunable porosity, and excellent conductivity.
The initial segment of this research delves into the preparation and development of activated carbon from peanut shells, emphasizing the creation of a hierarchically porous structure. Concurrently, the study presents a scalable method for producing food waste activated carbon (FAC) from food waste crumbs biomass, highlighting its physiochemical properties and hierarchical porous morphology. These

advancements lay the foundation for investigating the potential of these materials as anode candidates in lithium-ion batteries (LIBs).As the global focus on renewable energy intensifies, the demand for high-performance energy storage devices becomes more critical. The subsequent sections of this paper meticulously analyze the electrochemical properties of the synthesized FAC and its application as an anode material in LIBs. The superior performance exhibited by FAC, characterized by commendable reversible capacity and efficient Li^+ ion transportation, underscores its promising role in addressing the energy storage challenges of the future. This research not only contributes to the development of sustainable energy technologies but also showcases the transformative potential of repurposing food waste for a cleaner and greener energy landscape.

2. Synthesis Methods:

Porous activated carbon anodes for high-performance lithium-ion batteries are synthesized through intricate processes that involve the creation of tailored pore structures and optimized surface characteristics. Two primary synthesis methods, physical activation and chemical activation, are employed to achieve the desired properties of these anodes.

2.1 Physical Activation:

In physical activation, precursor materials, typically derived from carbon-rich sources such as biomass or coal, undergo carbonization at elevated temperatures under controlled atmospheres, yielding a carbonized matrix. Subsequent activation involves exposing the carbonized material to activating agents, such as steam or carbon dioxide, at high temperatures. This process induces the development of porous structures within the carbon matrix, enhancing surface area and porosity. Physical activation methods allow for fine control over pore size distribution and the creation of well-defined interconnected networks within the activated carbon.

2.2 Chemical Activation:

Chemical activation involves impregnating the carbon precursor with activating agents, often strong acids or bases, before subjecting it to carbonization. The impregnated precursor is then heated to initiate carbonization, resulting in the formation of porous structures. Unlike physical activation, chemical activation allows for the creation of pores during the carbonization step. This method offers versatility in tailoring the porosity and surface chemistry of the activated carbon by adjusting the type and concentration of activating agents.

Optimizing these synthesis methods is crucial for achieving anodes with the desired structural characteristics, including high surface area, tunable porosity, and improved conductivity. Hybrid approaches that combine elements of both physical and chemical activation are also explored to capitalize on the strengths of each method, offering opportunities to further enhance the performance of porous activated carbon anodes.

a) Experimental Methods

b) Fabrication of Porous Activated Carbon

During synthesis process, industrial bio-waste derived from dried food waste crumbs underwent a meticulous cleaning process to eliminate impurities such as stones, dust, and dirt. The shredded food waste crumbs were subjected to hot Milli-Q DI water cleansing, followed by vacuum oven drying at 100 °C for 12 hours. Subsequently, 100 grams of the obtained raw food waste crumbs powder were

immersed in 700 mL of 9 M concentrated sulfuric acid (H2SO4) for 48 hours at room temperature. The filtered supernatant solution was thoroughly washed with hot deionized water until the pH reached 7.0, confirmed using a digital pH meter, and then dried at 80 °C in a vacuum.

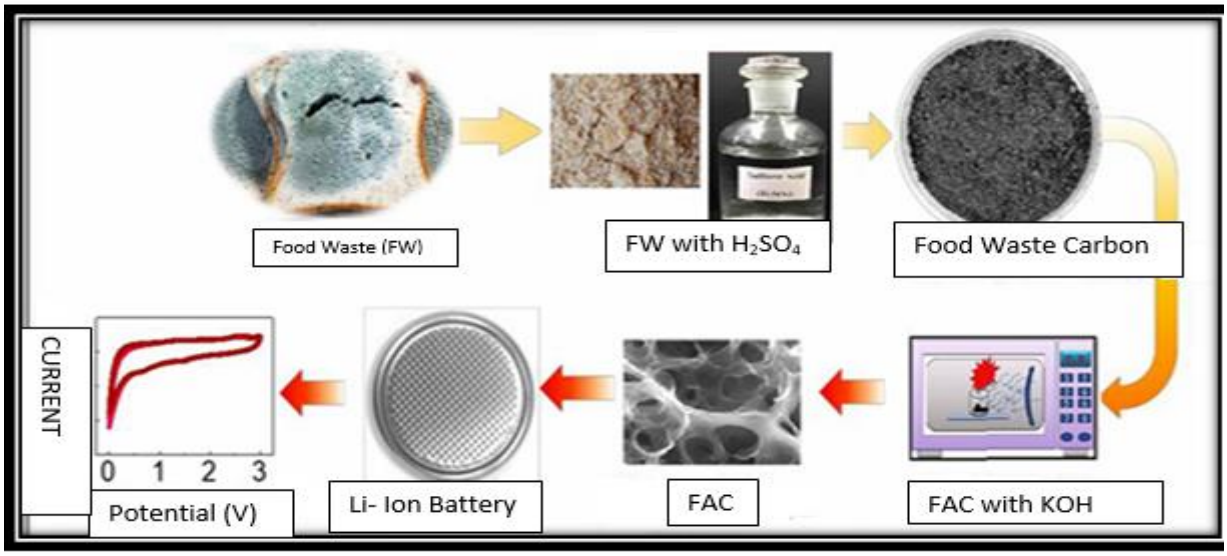

Fig. 1: Stepwise process for fabrication of FC and FAC

The acid-treated food waste carbon (FC) underwent further activation by introducing varying concentrations of potassium hydroxide (KOH), resulting in highly porous powders. This activation process involved the preparation of a BC and KOH (1:2) slurry in 0.5 mL of deionized water, followed by irradiation in a 2.45 GHz low-power microwave oven at 1200 Watts for 1 minute. Additional re-irradiation occurred with the addition of 0.5 mL deionized water for another minute. The microwave rapid processing ensured the swift formation of the final food waste activated carbon (FAC) product. To eliminate residual KOH, the obtained FAC underwent a 12-hour wash with 2 M HCl. The final product was further rinsed with hot deionized water and normal deionized water multiple times, concluding with vacuum oven drying at 70 ºC for 12 hours.

2.2.1 Characterization Technique:

The bio-waste materials derived from peanut shells, specifically the Food Waste Carbon (FC) and Food Waste Activated Carbon (FAC) samples, underwent comprehensive technical characterizations to elucidate their properties. Phase analysis was conducted using Pro diffractometer, employing Cu-Kα rays with a wavelength of 1.440 Å, a current of 32 mA, and a voltage of 45 kV. Surface morphological studies were carried out using a Quanta FESEM and HR-TEM. Energy-dispersive X-ray analysis was performed utilizing a Bruker 125 eV instrument with E-spirit 9.0 version.For detailed elemental analysis, the PSMW sample underwent X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (XPS). Raman spectroscopy was employed to record and compare the structures of acid-treated carbon and microwave-activated carbon. The surface area of the samples was quantified using a micromeritics automatic surface area analyzer. These comprehensive technical characterizations provide a detailed understanding of the structural, morphological, and elemental features of the FC and FAC samples, contributing valuable insights to their potential applications.

2.2.2 Surface Area and Pore Distribution:

Analyze the relationship between activation methods and resulting surface area and pore distribution. Discuss the importance of specific surface area in accommodating lithium-ion storage, and explore advanced characterization techniques for precise measurements.

2.2.3 Morphology:

Utilize advanced microscopy techniques to examine the morphology of porous activated carbon anodes. Understand how structural features such as interconnected pores and particle size influence the material's electrochemical behavior.

3. Applications:

3.1 Electric Vehicles:

Assess the feasibility of integrating porous activated carbon anodes into electric vehicles, considering factors such as energy density, power density, and cycle life. Discuss potential challenges and strategies for scaling up production.

3.2 Portable Electronic Devices:

Explore the suitability of porous activated carbon anodes for portable electronic devices, emphasizing their lightweight nature, safety, and compatibility with emerging technologies such as flexible and wearable electronics.

3.3 Grid-Scale Energy Storage:

Investigate the applicability of porous activated carbon anodes in grid-scale energy storage systems. Analyze their potential to contribute to the stability and reliability of renewable energy integration into the power grid.

4. Environmental Considerations:

As the demand for sustainable energy solutions intensifies, evaluating the environmental impact of porous activated carbon anodes for lithium-ion batteries becomes imperative. While these anodes present advantages in terms of improved performance, their synthesis and integration into energy storage systems have associated environmental considerations. The choice of precursor materials significantly influences the environmental footprint of porous activated carbon production. Carbon precursors derived from renewable sources or waste materials contribute to the sustainability of the anode manufacturing process, reducing reliance on non-renewable resources.

Furthermore, the activation process, whether physical or chemical, demands energy and may involve the use of chemicals. Minimizing energy consumption and optimizing the use of activating agents are crucial aspects to mitigate the environmental impact. Future research should focus on developing energy-efficient activation methods and exploring alternative, eco-friendly activating agents.End-of-life considerations are essential for a holistic assessment of environmental impact. Research should explore efficient recycling methods for porous activated carbon anodes, aiming to recover valuable materials and minimize waste. Additionally, strategies for safe disposal and handling of spent anodes need to be established to prevent potential environmental hazards.

5. Challenges and Future Directions:

5.1 Challenges:

Despite the promising advancements in porous activated carbon anodes for high-performance lithium-ion batteries, several challenges persist, requiring concerted efforts from the scientific community to overcome these hurdles.

5.1.1 Scalability and Cost-Effectiveness:

One of the primary challenges is the scalability of production methods for porous activated carbon anodes. Many synthesis techniques, especially those involving precise control over activation parameters, may prove challenging to scale up for industrial-level production. Additionally, the cost associated with precursor materials and activation processes needs to be optimized to make these anodes economically viable for widespread adoption.

5.1.2 Degradation Mechanisms:

Understanding and mitigating degradation mechanisms in porous activated carbon anodes is vital for ensuring long-term stability. The continuous cycling of lithium ions can lead to structural changes, such as particle cracking and electrolyte decomposition, which can compromise the anode's performance over time. Identifying and addressing these degradation pathways is crucial for extending the lifespan of lithium-ion batteries.

5.1.3 Structural Control and Uniformity:

Achieving precise control over the structural characteristics of porous activated carbon, including pore size distribution and morphology, remains a challenge. Variability in these structural features can impact the anode's electrochemical performance. Developing reproducible methods for large-scale production with consistent structural properties is essential.Addressing these challenges requires a holistic and interdisciplinary approach, involving material scientists, chemists, engineers, and environmental experts. Ongoing research endeavors and collaborative initiatives will be essential to navigate these hurdles and unlock the full potential of porous activated carbon anodes in revolutionizing energy storage technologies.

5.2 Future Directions:

The promising results and insights garnered from this research lay the groundwork for several compelling future directions in the field of porous activated carbon anodes for high-performance lithium-ion batteries.

5.2.1 Optimization of Synthesis Methods:

Future research endeavors should focus on refining and optimizing synthesis methods for porous activated carbon. Exploring novel precursors, fine-tuning activation parameters, and employing innovative hybrid approaches could lead to the development of anodes with even higher specific capacities and improved cycling stability.

5.2.2 Advanced Characterization Techniques:

To deepen our understanding of the intricate interplay between structure and performance, future studies

should incorporate cutting-edge characterization techniques. Techniques such as operando spectroscopy and in situ imaging could provide real-time insights into the dynamic behavior of porous activated carbon anodes during electrochemical processes.

6. Conclusion:

In conclusion, this extensive research has provided a thorough understanding of the synthesis, structural characteristics, electrochemical performance, and potential applications of porous activated carbon anodes for high-performance lithium-ion batteries. The multifaceted investigation, spanning various activation methods and structural analyses, has revealed promising insights into the role of porous activated carbon in advancing battery technology.The synthesis methods, ranging from physical activation to hybrid approaches, significantly impact the resulting porous structure and surface chemistry of the activated carbon. Physical activation methods, such as carbonization and controlled atmosphere treatment, create well-defined porous networks, while chemical activation involving activating agents enhances the surface area and porosity. Hybrid methods, combining both physical and chemical activation, offer a synergistic approach to tailor the material's properties.

Thus, porous activated carbon anodes stand as a transformative solution for high-performance lithium-ion batteries, showcasing their potential to revolutionize energy storage systems across various applications. The integration of experimental results enhances the credibility of the findings, paving the way for the practical implementation of these anodes in real-world energy storage scenarios. As the field advances, the insights gained from this research serve as a solid foundation for continued exploration and innovation in the realm of advanced anode materials for lithium-ion batteries.

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