

# SYNERGISTIC INFLUENCE OF NITRITE ON INHIBITION OF MILD STEEL CORROSION IN CHLORIDE CONTAMINATED ALKALINE SOLUTION

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**Abstract:** Corrosion behavior of mild steel in chloride contaminated alkaline solution has been studied for the period up to 100 days. Saturated Calcium hydroxide solution was used as alkaline solution and 0.5M NaCl solution was used to accelerate mild steel corrosion. The Charge transfer resistance  $R_{ct}$ , Current density  $I_{corr}$  and inhibition efficiency values were obtained from tafel polarization and electrochemical impedance spectroscopic technique for sodium nitrite, sodium citrate and sodium benzoate mixed inhibitors. The results were compared with nitrite inhibitive system. The combination of nitrite inhibitor along with benzoate and citrate inhibitors enhanced the durability of mild steel through formation of nanosized  $-Fe_2O_3$  film on steel surface even in presence of high chloride contamination. The results obtained from gravimetric method proved that the 100 days exposure of mild steel in nitrite with citrate, nitrite with citrate and benzoate mixed inhibitors showed the maximum inhibition efficiency of 98% in comparison with nitrite inhibitive system alone (41.5%). The maximum corrosion resistance performance of these mixed inhibitors system was due to the formation of thick layer of nano  $\gamma Fe_2O_3$  fibrous film on steel surface.

**Keywords:** Corrosion, Chloride, Calcium Hydroxide, Tafel Polarization Technique.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The corrosion behavior of mild steel in chloride contaminated alkaline solution [1-3, 5, 6, 8, 11-13] has received considerable attention in the recent years due to its rebar corrosion problem facing by the construction industries, especially in industrial and in marine environmental conditions [10,14]. Mild steel protection in these chloride contaminated alkaline environment is due to the formation of protective iron oxide (magnetite) layer [1,9] on steel surface. There are many corrosion protective system which are available to mitigate rebar corrosion in concrete structure such as Cathodic protection, Fiber reinforced concrete, using chemical admixtures and corrosion inhibitors. Among these the use of corrosion inhibitor [1, 5, 8] is one of the effective maintenance free protective systems for minimizing steel rebar corrosion in chloride contaminated alkaline environment.

Ameer et al [2] have investigated inhibition of steel in chloride contaminated alkaline solution using two carbonitrile type of organic inhibitor and the results of the potentiodynamic

polarization tests revealed that the current density of these inhibitors decreases while increasing the concentration of inhibitors. In one investigation ascorbic acid [5] was used as corrosion inhibitor for steel in alkaline media containing chloride ions, ascorbic acid suppress the pitting corrosion through cathodic mechanism. Simulated concrete pore solution study [6] was also carried out for carbon steel corrosion by impedance and polarization tests using benzotriazole inhibitor. In this study 3.5% NaCl contamination was used to accelerate corrosion. Sodium nitrite inhibitor is identified as an effective corrosion inhibitor for rebar corrosion [1, 6, 8] in chloride contaminated alkaline medium. An extensive electrochemical studies were reported using this nitrite inhibitor. Recently the synergistic action of nitrite inhibitor along with other inhibitors were also studied and reported. Girciene et al [1] evaluated inhibition of nitrite inhibitor along with silicate inhibitor in chloride contaminated alkaline solution by voltametric and electrochemical impedance study and found that the additional introduction of sodium silicate increased the oxide layer thickness by 8 nm.

The present investigation deals with finding

out the corrosion resistance performance of mild steel in chloride contaminated saturated  $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$  solution containing novel mixed inhibitive system of sodium nitrite, sodium citrate and sodium benzoate.

## 2. EXPERIMENTAL

The corrosion resistance performance of mild steel in chloride contaminated saturated calcium hydroxide solution containing various concentration of sodium nitrite, sodium benzoate and sodium citrate inhibitors were evaluated by 1. Gravimetric method, 2. Tafel polarization method and 3. Electrochemical impedance spectroscopic method. 0.5M NaCl solution was used to accelerate corrosion of mild steel. The maximum exposure period for this investigation was 100 days.

Polished, degreased mild steel specimens (exposed area of  $10 \text{ cm}^2$ ) were immersed in saturated  $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2 + 0.5\text{M NaCl}$  solution (as control) and various inhibitors added systems were:

- 0.4M sodium nitrite,
- 0.05M sodium citrate and
- 0.2M sodium benzoate respectively.

The mixed inhibitor systems used in this present investigation were;

- 0.05M sodium citrate + 0.05M sodium benzoate,
- 0.05M sodium citrate + 0.4M sodium nitrite,
- 0.05M sodium benzoate + 0.2M sodium nitrite and
- 0.2M sodium nitrite+0.1M sodium citrate +0.05M sodium benzoate respectively.

### 2. 1. Gravimetric Method

The initial weight of the mild steel specimens were noted for each set of inhibitive and mixed inhibitive system. The weight loss measurements were made after 40 and 100 days exposure. After 40<sup>th</sup> and 100 days of exposure periods, the mild steel specimens were taken out, cleaned in clark's solution (Concentrated HCl (sp.gr.1.19)1

litre + Antimony trioxide ( $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_3$ )20g + Stannous chloride( $\text{SnCl}_2$ )50g) and finally rinsed with distilled water, air dried and then weighed. From the weight loss, the corrosion rate was calculated by applying the following formula and reported in Table 1.

$$\text{Corrosion rate (mmpy)} = 87.6 \frac{W}{DAT}$$

W = Weight loss, mg  
D = density of specimens,  $\text{g/cm}^3$   
A = area of specimens in  $\text{cm}^2$   
T = exposure time, hr

From the corrosion rate (mmpy) measured, the inhibition efficiency is calculated by using the following formula

$$I.E = \frac{\text{Corrosion rate of control system} - \text{corrosion rate of inhibitor added system}}{\text{Corrosion rate of control}} \times 100$$

Where I.E is Inhibition Efficiency

### 2. 2. Tafel Polarization Technique

Polished, degreased mild steel specimens ( $1 \text{ cm}^2$  area exposed) were subjected to potentiodynamic polarisation (scan rate  $1\text{mV/sec}$ ,  $\pm 200\text{mV}$  from OCP values) for various inhibitor and mixed inhibitors system. A platinum foil ( $2 \text{ cm}^2$ ) area was used as counter electrode and Ag/AgCl electrode was used as reference electrode in a three electrode cell system. The experiments were carried out after 0 hour of immersion as (Initial) and after 4hrs, 20 days and 100 days of immersion to verify the stability of the passive film even in the presence of aggressive chloride ions. From the polarisation curve,  $E_{\text{corr}}$ ,  $I_{\text{corr}}$ ,  $b_a$  and  $b_c$  values were recorded from the tafel plots shown in Fig. 2-5 and corrosion rate (mmpy) the inhibition efficiency (%) values were calculated and reported in Table 2.

$$\text{Corrosion rate(mmpy)} = 3.2 * I_{\text{corr}}(\text{mA/cm}^2) * \frac{\text{Eq. wt}}{\text{Density}}$$

Note:

For measurement of corrosion rate in Millimeter per year;

Equivalent weight of iron 55.8 g/mol  
 Density of iron 7.86 g/cm<sup>3</sup> were taken

b<sub>a</sub> = anodic tafel slope  
 b<sub>c</sub> = cathodic tafel slope

**2. 3. Electrochemical Impedance Spectroscopic technique**

Polished, degreased mild steel specimens (1 cm<sup>2</sup> area exposed) were subjected to impedance analysis (AC voltage 15mV; Frequency range 10mHz – 100 KHz) for saturated Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub> +0.5M NaCl as control and various inhibitors added systems. A platinum foil (2 cm<sup>2</sup>) area was used as counter electrode and Ag/AgCl electrode was used as reference electrode in a three electrode cell system. The impedance behaviour for various inhibitor systems were obtained in terms of Bode Z plot (from Fig. 6-10). From the plots, charge transfer resistance(R<sub>t</sub>), corrosion rate (mmpy) and inhibition efficiency (%) values were calculated and reported in Table 3. Corrosion current I<sub>corr</sub> can be evaluated from R<sub>t</sub> using Stern Geary equation.

$$I_{corr} = \frac{b_a b_c}{2.303(b_a + b_c)} * \frac{I}{R_t} = \frac{K}{R_t}$$

$$Corrosion\ rate(mmpy) = 3.2 * I_{corr}(mA/cm^2) * \frac{Eq.\ wt}{Density}$$

**3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**3. 1. Inhibition Efficiency by Gravimetric Method**

The inhibition efficiency calculated for control, various inhibitors added systems were reported in Table 1 and in Fig. 1. From the table, it was inferred that in the case of control, the passivity is heavily destroyed by the aggressive chloride ions as indicated by the corrosion rate data and it was noted that all the inhibitors initially (after 40 days) showed more than 80% inhibition efficiency but after 100 days of exposure, only the mixed inhibitors containing nitrite as one of the inhibitor maintained the passivity even in presence of high chloride concentration. In the case of citrate-nitrite-benzoate system, significant improvement in passivity of mild steel was observed.

**Table 1.**Weight loss study

| System studied           | Period of immersion | Weight loss (mg) | Corrosion rate (mmpy) | Inhibition efficiency (%) |
|--------------------------|---------------------|------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Control                  | 40                  | 567              | 0.6577                | --                        |
|                          | 100                 | 465              | 0.0948                | --                        |
| Nitrite                  | 40                  | 103              | 0.1195                | 81.8                      |
|                          | 100                 | 107              | 0.0550                | 41.5                      |
| Citrate                  | 40                  | 48               | 0.0556                | 91.5                      |
|                          | 100                 | 206              | 0.0560                | 40.9                      |
| Benzoate                 | 40                  | 105              | 0.1218                | 81.5                      |
|                          | 100                 | 179              | 0.0823                | 13.2                      |
| Citrate-benzoate         | 40                  | 133              | 0.1543                | 76.5                      |
|                          | 100                 | 109              | 0.0710                | 25.1                      |
| Citrate-nitrite          | 40                  | 9                | 0.0104                | 98.4                      |
|                          | 100                 | 41               | 0.0048                | 94.9                      |
| Nitrite-benzoate         | 40                  | 39               | 0.0452                | 93.1                      |
|                          | 100                 | 40               | 0.0208                | 78.1                      |
| Citrate-Nitrite-benzoate | 40                  | 70               | 0.0812                | 87.6                      |
|                          | 100                 | 83               | 0.0014                | 98.5                      |

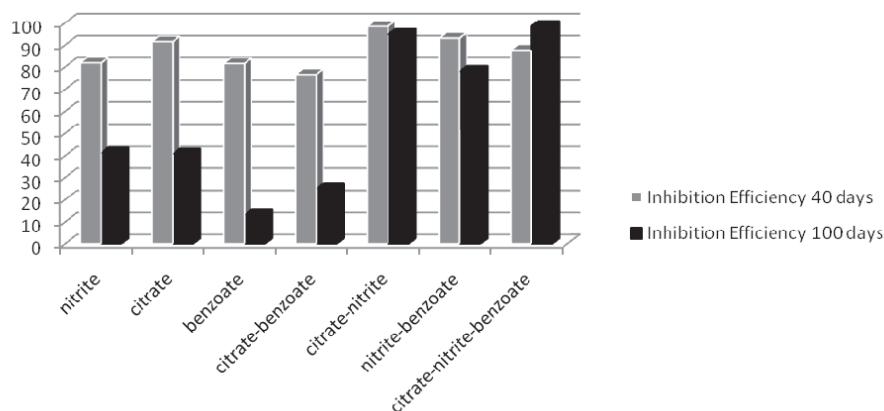


Fig. 1. Inhibition efficiency of various inhibitors and mixed inhibitors by gravimetric method

### 3. 2. Potentiodynamic Polarization (Tafel)

$I_{corr}$ , corrosion rate (mmpy) and inhibition efficiency (%) calculated for various inhibitive system were reported in Table 2 and shown in Fig. 2-5. From the table,  $I_{corr}$  values measured initially and after 4 hrs, 20 days and 100 days of exposures showed that the individual inhibitive systems, nitrite, citrate and benzoate maintained stable passivity (0.0012, 0.0022 and 0.0018) even after 100 days of exposure in aggressive chloride solutions and in the case of 20<sup>th</sup> days of exposure it was found that the sudden decrease in  $I_{corr}$  was

observed for citrate and benzoate systems and again repassivation occurs during 100<sup>th</sup> days of exposure. In the case of mixed inhibitive systems, the  $I_{corr}$  values showed that all the systems maintained perfect passivity even after 100 days of exposure and an excellent passivation was observed in the case of citrate-nitrite-benzoate inhibitive systems. This may be due to the synergistic effect of nitrite-citrate-benzoate in which the innermost nano layer consists of  $\gamma\text{Fe}_3\text{O}_4$  and the outermost layer consists of iron-citrate and iron-benzoate nanofibrous coating and this has been confirmed in the SEM Fig.14.

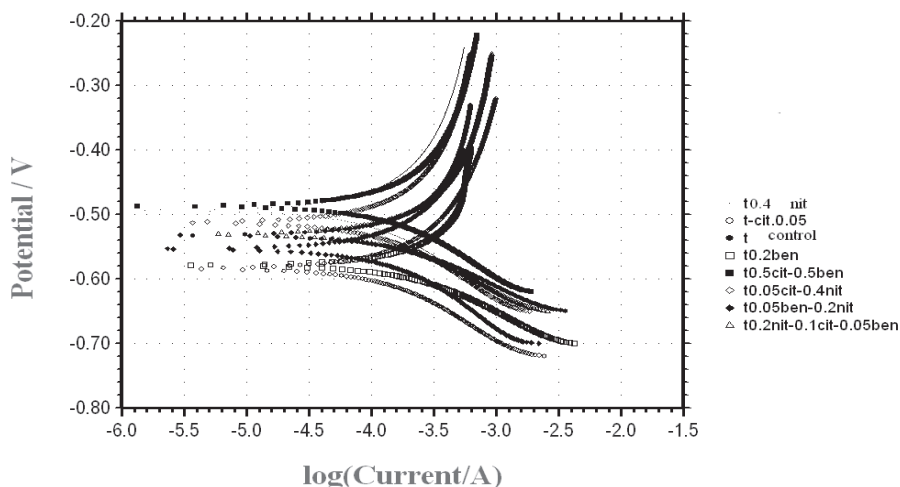


Fig. 2. Tafel plot of mild steel specimens exposed to control and various inhibiting systems for the immersion period of initial

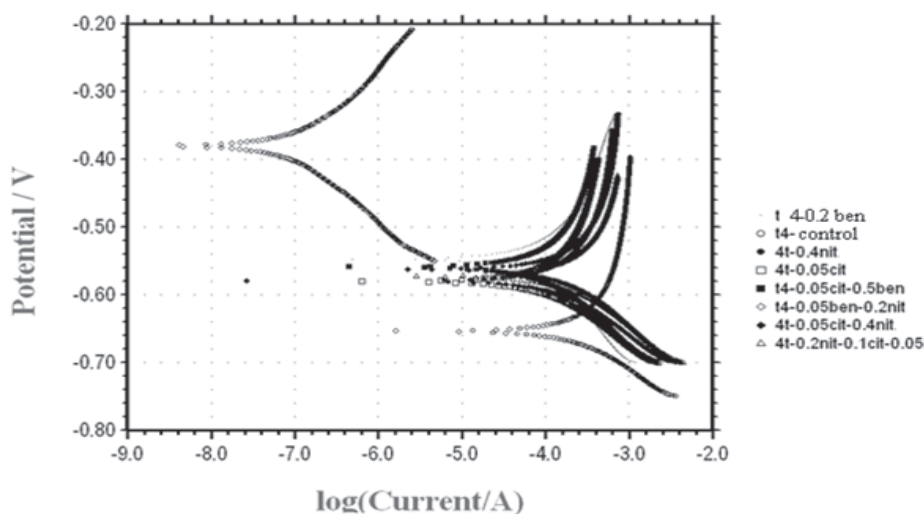


Fig. 3. Tafel plot of mild steel specimens exposed to control and various inhibiting systems for the immersion period 4hrs

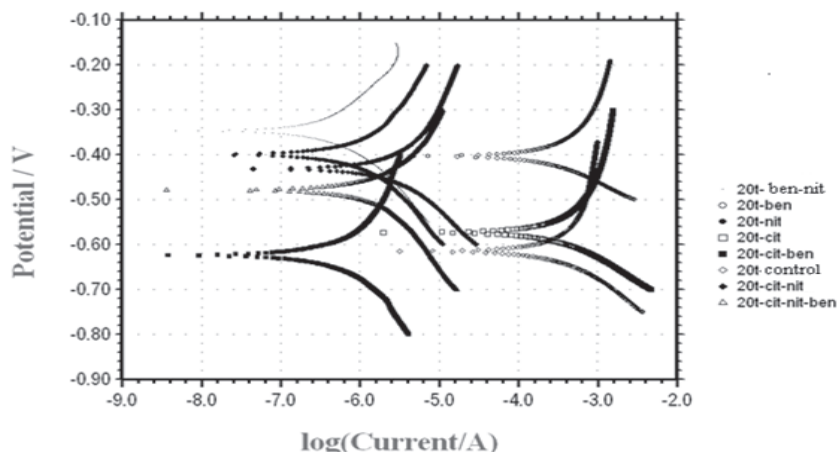


Fig. 4. Tafel plot of mild steel specimens exposed to control and various inhibiting systems for the immersion period 20days

### 3. 3. Electrochemical Impedance Spectroscopic Technique

Polarisation resistance  $R_p$ (K. $\Omega$ ), corrosion rate (mmpy) and inhibition efficiency (%) calculated for control, various inhibitors and for various mixed inhibitor added systems (from Fig.6-9) were reported in Table 4. The initially measured  $R_p$  value for control system was 0.386 K. $\Omega$  after 100th days of exposure, the  $R_p$  value decreased to 0.126 K. $\Omega$ . This observation was made due to the permeation of chloride ion into the passive film

casues depassivation. On the otherhand, the  $R_p$  values measured after 100<sup>th</sup> days of exposure for mixed inhibitor systems added systems showed gradual increase in  $R_p$  values from 0hr, 4hr, 20 days and 100 days of exposure when compared with individual inhibitor systems. The inhibition efficiencies were found to be 99.3, 99.3, 99.7 and 99.3 for 0.05M sodium citrate + 0.05M sodium benzoate, 0.05M sodium citrate + 0.4M sodium nitrite, 0.05M sodium benzoate + 0.2M sodium nitrite and 0.2M sodium nitrite+0.1M sodium citrate +0.05M sodium benzoate inhibitor

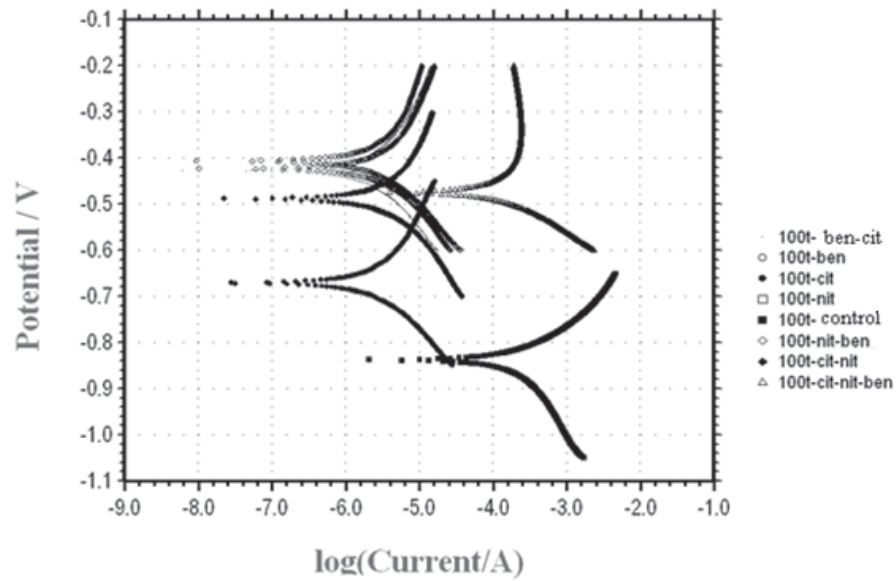


Fig. 5. Tafel plot of mild steel specimens exposed to control and various inhibiting systems for the immersion period 100days

Table 2. Tafel polarization technique

| System studied           | Period of immersion | Ba mV/Dec | Bc mV/Dec | E <sub>corr</sub> mV vs Ag/AgCl | I <sub>corr</sub> (mA/cm <sup>2</sup> ) | Corrosion rate (mmpy) | I.E (%) |
|--------------------------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|---------------------------------|---|-----------------------|---------|
| Control                  | 0 hr                | 40        | 50        | -488                            | 0.1933                                  | 2.2616                | --      |
|                          | 4 hr                | 100       | 120       | -572                            | 0.4211                                  | 4.9269                | --      |
|                          | 20 days             | 100       | 60        | -375                            | 0.4858                                  | 5.6838                | --      |
|                          | 100 days            | 120       | 140       | -412                            | 0.2522                                  | 2.9507                | --      |
| Nitrite                  | 0 hr                | 180       | 60        | -482                            | 0.0175                                  | 0.2048                | 90.9    |
|                          | 4 hr                | 90        | 40        | -524                            | 0.1778                                  | 2.0803                | 57.8    |
|                          | 20 days             | 40        | 40        | -400                            | 0.0070                                  | 0.0819                | 98.6    |
|                          | 100 days            | 80        | 50        | -403                            | 0.0012                                  | 0.0140                | 99.5    |
| Citrate                  | 0 hr                | 160       | 80        | -540                            | 0.0125                                  | 0.1463                | 93.5    |
|                          | 4 hr                | 100       | 80        | -509                            | 0.0562                                  | 0.6575                | 86.7    |
|                          | 20 days             | 180       | 100       | -535                            | 0.4298                                  | 5.0287                | 11.5    |
|                          | 100 days            | 140       | 120       | -657                            | 0.0022                                  | 0.0257                | 99.1    |
| Benzoate                 | 0 hr                | 160       | 60        | -497                            | 0.2720                                  | 3.1824                | --      |
|                          | 4 hr                | 190       | 110       | -509                            | 0.0438                                  | 0.5125                | 89.6    |
|                          | 20 days             | 160       | 60        | -420                            | 0.3418                                  | 3.9991                | 29.6    |
|                          | 100 days            | 160       | 80        | -370                            | 0.0018                                  | 0.0211                | 99.3    |
| Citrate-benzoate         | 0 hr                | 100       | 60        | -470                            | 0.1036                                  | 1.2121                | 46.4    |
|                          | 4hr                 | 140       | 60        | -521                            | 0.0034                                  | 0.1256                | 97.5    |
|                          | 20 days             | 120       | 80        | -625                            | 0.0005                                  | 0.0059                | 99.8    |
|                          | 100 days            | 140       | 100       | -820                            | 0.0013                                  | 0.0152                | 99.5    |
| Citrate-nitrite          | 0 hr                | 160       | 100       | -463                            | 0.1163                                  | 1.3607                | 90.1    |
|                          | 4 hr                | 160       | 100       | -499                            | 0.1931                                  | 2.2593                | 54.1    |
|                          | 20 days             | 80        | 60        | -431                            | 0.0025                                  | 0.0293                | 99.5    |
|                          | 100 days            | 140       | 100       | -447                            | 0.0032                                  | 0.0374                | 98.7    |
| Benzoate-nitrite         | 0 hr                | 140       | 100       | -521                            | 0.0572                                  | 0.6692                | 70.4    |
|                          | 4 hr                | 120       | 100       | -381                            | 0.0009                                  | 0.0105                | 99.8    |
|                          | 20 days             | 80        | 80        | -555                            | 0.0003                                  | 0.0035                | 99.9    |
|                          | 100 days            | 100       | 80        | -399                            | 0.0024                                  | 0.0281                | 99.0    |
| Citrate-nitrite-benzoate | 0 hr                | 190       | 90        | -494                            | 0.2306                                  | 2.6981                | --      |
|                          | 4 hr                | 120       | 80        | -533                            | 0.1709                                  | 1.9995                | 59.4    |
|                          | 20 days             | 100       | 60        | -430                            | 0.1671                                  | 1.9551                | 33.7    |
|                          | 100 days            | 120       | 140       | -492                            | 0.0003                                  | 0.0035                | 99.9    |

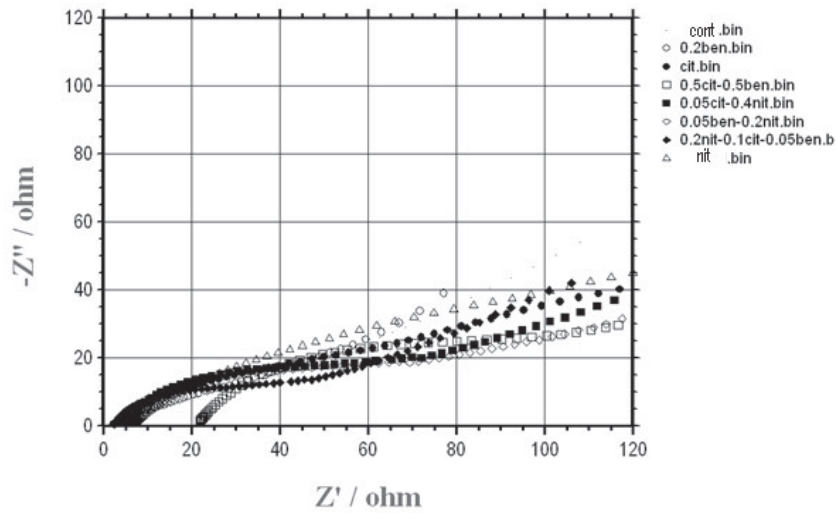


Fig. 6. Nyquist plot of mild steel specimens exposed to control +various inhibitors for the immersion period of 0 days.

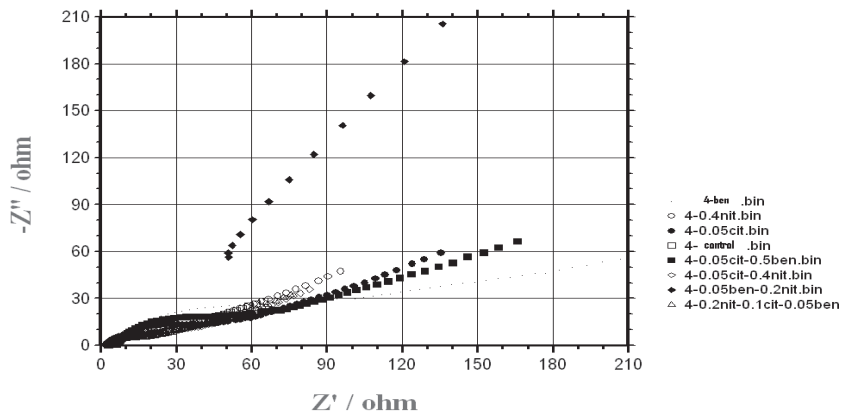


Fig. 7. Nyquist plot of mild steel specimens exposed to control +various inhibitors for the immersion period of 4 hrs.

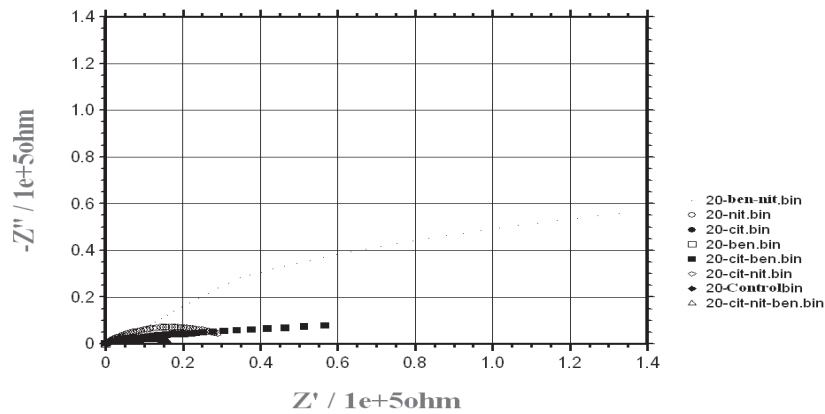


Fig. 8. Nyquist plot of mild steel specimens exposed to control +various inhibitors for the immersion period of 20 days.

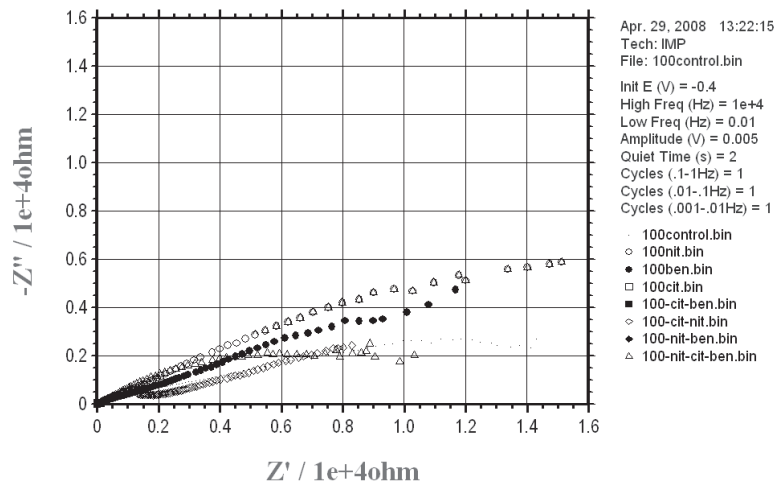


Fig. 9. Nyquist plot of mild steel specimens exposed to control +various inhibitors for the immersion period of 100 days.

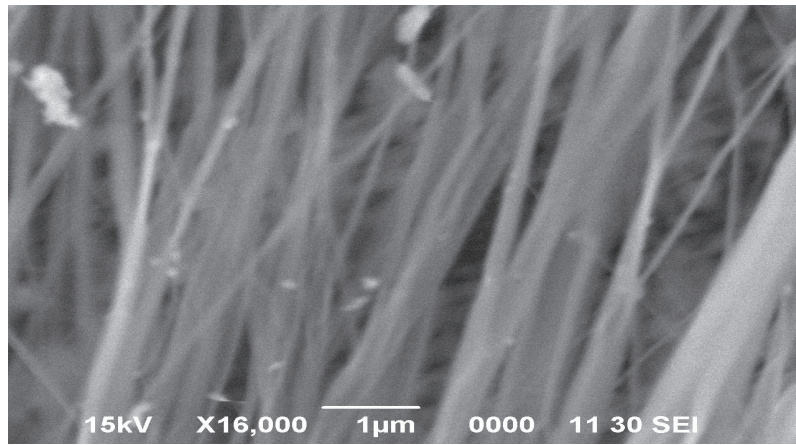


Fig. 10. Mild steel specimens after 100 days of exposure in chlorine contaminated alkaline solution

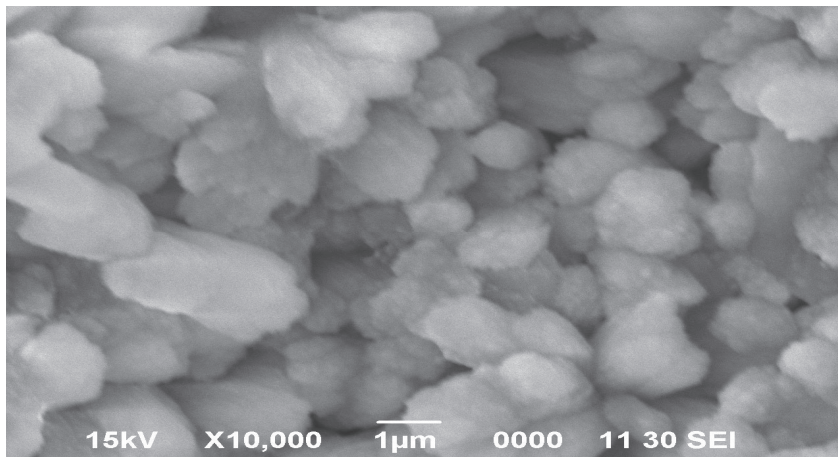


Fig. 11. Mild steel specimens after 100 days of exposure in control + Citrate-benzoate inhibitive systems



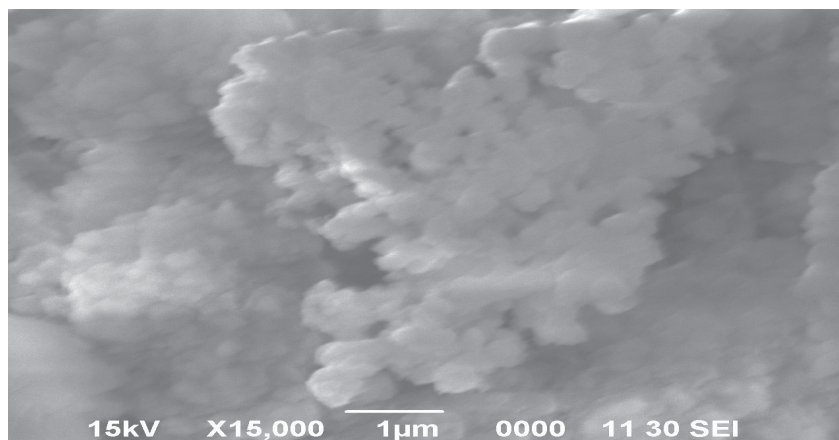


Fig. 12. Mild steel specimens after 100 days of exposure in control + Citrate-nitrite inhibitive systems

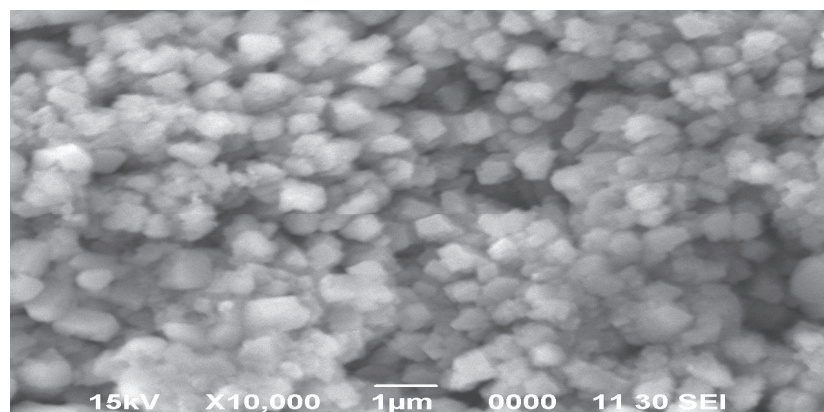


Fig. 13. Mild steel specimens after 100 days of exposure in control + benzoate-nitrite inhibitive systems.

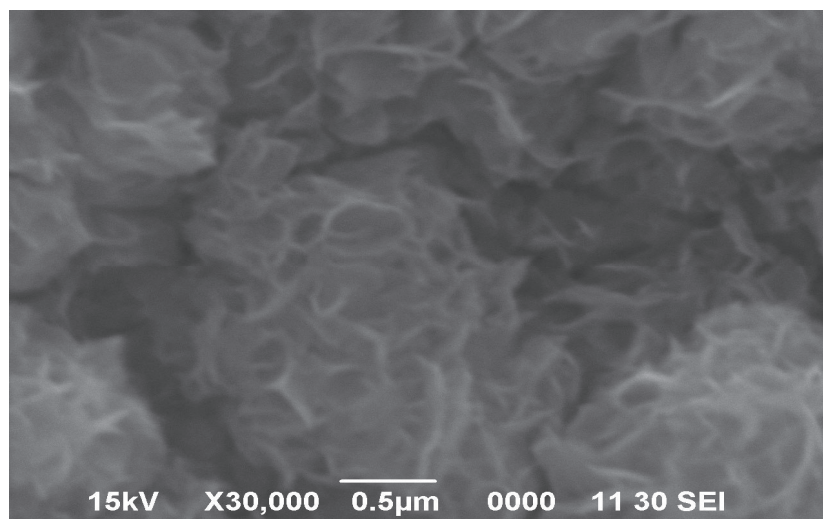


Fig. 14. Mild steel specimens after 100 days of exposure in control + citrate-benzoate-nitrite inhibitive systems.

**Table 3.** Electrical Impedance Spectroscopic technique

| System studied           | Period of immersion | $R_p$ K, $\Omega$ | Stern geary constant (mV / dec) | $I_{corr}$ (mA/cm <sup>2</sup> ) | Corrosion rate (mmpy) | I.E (%) |
|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|---------|
| Control                  | 0 hr                | 0.386             | 20                              | 0.0518                           | 0.6112                | --      |
|                          | 4 hr                | 0.367             | 30                              | 0.0817                           | 0.9641                | --      |
|                          | 20 days             | 0.719             | 16                              | 0.0223                           | 0.2631                | --      |
|                          | 100 days            | 0.126             | 28                              | 0.2222                           | 2.6220                | --      |
| Nitrite                  | 0 hr                | 0.352             | 10                              | 0.0284                           | 0.3351                | 45.2    |
|                          | 4 hr                | 0.736             | 12                              | 0.0163                           | 0.1923                | 80.0    |
|                          | 20 days             | 35.65             | 09                              | 0.0002                           | 0.0024                | 99.1    |
|                          | 100 days            | 16.16             | 13                              | 0.0008                           | 0.0094                | 99.6    |
| Citrate                  | 0 hr                | 0.285             | 23                              | 0.0807                           | 0.9523                | --      |
|                          | 4 hr                | 0.358             | 19                              | 0.0531                           | 0.6266                | 35.0    |
|                          | 20 days             | 0.480             | 28                              | 0.0583                           | 0.6879                | --      |
|                          | 100 days            | 5.698             | 28                              | 0.0049                           | 0.0578                | 97.8    |
| Benzoate                 | 0 hr                | 0.580             | 19                              | 0.0328                           | 0.3870                | 36.7    |
|                          | 4 hr                | 0.556             | 24                              | 0.0432                           | 0.5098                | 47.1    |
|                          | 20 days             | 0.333             | 19                              | 0.0570                           | 0.6726                | --      |
|                          | 100 days            | 13.20             | 23                              | 0.0017                           | 0.0201                | 99.2    |
| Citrate-benzoate         | 0 hr                | 0.872             | 16                              | 0.0183                           | 0.2159                | 64.7    |
|                          | 4 hr                | 0.419             | 18                              | 0.0429                           | 0.5062                | 47.5    |
|                          | 20 days             | 71.76             | 21                              | 0.0003                           | 0.0035                | 98.7    |
|                          | 100 days            | 16.58             | 25                              | 0.0015                           | 0.0177                | 99.3    |
| Citrate-nitrite          | 0 hr                | 0.529             | 27                              | 0.0510                           | 0.6018                | 01.5    |
|                          | 4 hr                | 0.481             | 27                              | 0.0561                           | 0.6620                | 31.3    |
|                          | 20 days             | 13.39             | 15                              | 0.0011                           | 0.0130                | 95.0    |
|                          | 100 days            | 15.59             | 25                              | 0.0016                           | 0.0189                | 99.3    |
| Benzoate-nitrite         | 0 hr                | 0.287             | 25                              | 0.0871                           | 1.0280                | --      |
|                          | 4 hr                | 126.5             | 24                              | 0.0002                           | 0.0024                | 99.8    |
|                          | 20 days             | 339.6             | 17                              | 0.00005                          | 0.0006                | 99.8    |
|                          | 100 days            | 25.88             | 19                              | 0.0007                           | 0.0083                | 99.7    |
| Citrate-nitrite-benzoate | 0 hr                | 0.776             | 27                              | 0.0348                           | 0.4106                | 32.8    |
|                          | 4 hr                | 0.411             | 21                              | 0.0511                           | 0.6030                | 37.5    |
|                          | 20 days             | 19.19             | 28                              | 0.0015                           | 0.0177                | 93.3    |
|                          | 100 days            | 10.03             | 16                              | 0.0016                           | 0.0189                | 99.3    |

systems exposed to 100<sup>th</sup> days of exposure respectively. This was due to the synergistic action of nitrite with citrate and benzoate systems.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

From the above studies conducted, the following broad conclusions were drawn, The mixed inhibitors containing nitrite as one of the inhibitor maintaining the passivity even in

presence of high chloride concentration of 0.5M NaCl. The combination of nitrite ions with other inhibitive systems showed the synergism that enhanced the durability through repassivation. Especially in the case of citrate-nitrite-benzoate system, significant improvement in passivity on mild steel was observed. Further the nanofibrous coating of -Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> appeared on mild steel enhanced the durability through barrier type protection. The results obtained from gravimetric method confirm that the 100 days exposure of

mild steel in nitrite with citrate, nitrite with citrate and benzoate mixed inhibitors showed the maximum inhibition efficiency of 98% in comparison with nitrite inhibitive system alone (41.5%). The maximum corrosion resistance performance of these mixed inhibitors system was due to the formation of thick layer of nano  $\gamma\text{Fe}_2\text{O}_3$  fibrous film on steel surface.

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