

**PROCESS PARAMETER OPTIMIZATION OF WASHING  
PRETREATMENT FOR INORGANIC REMOVAL FROM  
RICE HUSK**

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## ABSTRACT

Rice husk is particularly known as one of the most common agricultural waste and the usage of rice husk in energy applications is typically via the combustion process. Using agricultural waste for combustion application can lead to slagging, corrosion and fouling of boilers due to some problematic elements such as K and Cl. Water washing removes those problematic elements from rice husk and hot water washing treatment improves the removal efficiency of those alkali oxides, halides and total ash content. Further, hot water washing pretreatment has been identified as an effective method compared to acid treatment and alkali treatment.

This study is aimed at optimizing the washing parameters; washing temperature, time and water to biomass ratio. Effectiveness of washing was directly evaluated by conductivity measurements and the removal of inorganic elements. The second order kinetic model was successfully applied for the leaching of K and Cl species and the kinetic parameters were obtained.

Washing temperature has significant effect on Si removal, a considerable effect on K removal and a very weak effect of Cl removal. Moreover, water/biomass ratio has an appreciable effect on K removal, a very weak effect on Cl removal whereas almost no effect of Si removal. Washing temperature of 65 °C and water to biomass ratio of 100 was selected as the optimum process conditions. At the selected optimum conditions, about 84% of K and 81% of Cl can be removed while Si removal is insignificant. Within 10 minutes leaching time, 97% of leachable Cl and 81% leachable K can be removed.

**Key words:** Rice husk, Washing, Alkali, Leaching kinetics

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration of the candidate and supervisor .....	i
Abstract .....	ii
Acknowledgement.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Tables .....	v
List of Figure.....	vi
Nomenclature .....	vii
List of Appendices.....	vii
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 Research Objectives .....	2
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW .....	3
2.1 Selection of Biomass .....	3
2.2 Composition of Rice Husk and Deposition Problems During Combustion .....	4
2.3 Ash Forming Elements of Biomass .....	6
2.4 Washing Treatments .....	12
2.4.1 Acid treatments .....	12
2.4.2 Alkali treatments.....	12
2.4.3 Water washing treatment .....	13
2.5 Leaching Kinetics.....	18
2.6 Research Gap.....	19
CHAPTER 3. MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY .....	20
3.1 Materials .....	20

3.2 Washing Apparatus .....	21
3.3 Methodology .....	21
3.3.1 Study the effect of washing temperature .....	21
3.3.2 Study the effect of L/S ratio.....	22
3.3.3 Study the effect of washing time .....	22
3.3.4 Composition analysis.....	22
3.4 Second Order Kinetic Model for Leachate.....	24
CHAPTER 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION .....	25
4.1 Leaching Behavior.....	25
4.1.1 Effect of temperature .....	25
4.1.2 Effect of L/S ratio .....	28
4.2 Removal of Problematic Elements .....	31
4.2.1 Effect of temperature on elemental removal.....	31
4.2.2 Effect of L/S ratio on elemental removal.....	32
4.3 Leaching Kinetics of K and Cl at Optimum Operating Conditions .....	34
CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	37

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 2. 1: Rice husk composition.....	4
Table 2. 2: Rice husk ash composition .....	4
Table 3. 1: Ash composition .....	20
Table 3. 2: Operating conditions.....	23
Table 4. 1: Calculated kinetic parameters for different temperature .....	26
Table 4. 2: Leaching capacity values at 90 minutes for different temperature .....	26
Table 4. 3: Calculated kinetic parameters for different L/S ratios .....	29
Table 4. 4: Leaching capacity values at 90 minutes for different L/S ratios .....	29
Table 4. 5: Removal percentages with different temperature .....	32
Table 4. 6: Removal percentages with different L/S ratio .....	34

Table 4. 7: Calculated kinetic parameters for K and Cl.....	35
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## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2. 1: Slagging and fouling problems in boilers.....	5
Figure 2. 2: Gas stream inside the furnace.....	6
Figure 2. 3: Reactions inside the furnace.....	7
Figure 2. 4: Comparison of washing methods applied for rice straw.....	14
Figure 2. 5: Leached metal content percentages of EFB biomass particles.....	15
Figure 2. 6: Leached metal content percentages of PKS biomass particles.....	16
Figure 2. 7: Leached percentages of inorganic ions on mallee wood and leaf.....	17
Figure 3. 1: Schematic diagram of the water washing experimental setup.....	21
Figure 3. 2: Test samples after the experiment with changing L/S ratio.....	23
Figure 4. 1: Electrical conductivity per gram Vs Washing time.....	25
Figure 4. 2: t/Ct Vs time.....	27
Figure 4. 3: Increment of Electrical conductivity per gram Vs Washing time for five L/S ratio.....	28
Figure 4. 4: t/Ct Vs time.....	30
Figure 4. 5: Elemental Removal Vs Temperature.....	31
Figure 4. 6: Elemental Removal Vs L/S ratio.....	33
Figure 4. 7: Removal Vs Time.....	35
Figure 4. 8: t/Ct Vs time.....	36

## NOMENCLATURE

### Abbreviations

L/S ratio - Liquid over Solids ratio

ICP-OES - Inductively Coupled Plasma Optical Emission Spectroscopy

ICP-MS - Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectroscopy

### Symbols

$C_{i,s}$  - Equilibrium concentration of species i (mg/L)

$C_{i,t}$  - Concentration of species i in water at a leaching time t (mg/L)

$k_i$  - First order leaching rate constant of species i ( $s^{-1}$ )

$k$  - Second order leaching rate constant ( $L\ mg^{-1}\ s^{-1}$ )

$h$  - Initial leaching rate ( $mg\ L^{-1}\ s^{-1}$ )

## LIST OF APPENDICES

**Appendix A** -Electrical conductivity per gram of husk sample .....43

**Appendix B** - Electrical conductivity per gram of husk sample .....44

**Appendix C** -Elemental removal (mg/g) at different L/S ratios .....45