International Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Drug Designing

https://trpub.org/index.php/IJPSDD

Vol 1, Issue 1, 2026

Energy Harvesting From Roadways

Gaddi Srikanth[1], Rampally Akhil[2], Dharmendar Ramawat[3], Kandukuri Sai[4], Kunta Srikanth[5]

[1] UG Student, Department of Civil Engineering, TKR College of Engineering

[2] UG Student, Department of Civil Engineering, B.V. Raju Institute of Technology

[3] UG Student, Department of Civil Engineering, CMR College of Engineering & Technology

[4,5] UG Students, Department of Civil Engineering, St. Martin's Engineering College, Dhulapally, Kompally

***Corresponding Author E-Mail:** kandukurisai01066@gmail.com

Abstract - The rapid growth in energy consumption and the need for sustainable alternatives have driven researchers to explore unconventional energy sources. Roadways, which constitute vast networks with significant vehicular activity, hold untapped potential for energy harvesting. This paper investigates innovative methodologies to harness energy from roadways leveraging advancements in piezoelectric, thermoelectric and photovoltaic technologies. Piezoelectric materials embedded in road surfaces can convert mechanical stress from vehicle motion into electrical energy. Thermoelectric systems utilize heat generated by vehicular friction and solar radiation to produce power.

***Keywords*-energy harvesting, piezoelectric energy harvesting, thermoelectric energy, photovoltaics, green technology, roadway energy**

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid urbanization and increasing global energy demand have intensified the need for sustainable and efficient energy solutions. Traditional energy sources are finite and environmentally detrimental, prompting the exploration of alternative energy harvesting methods. One promising area of innovation is the utilization of roadways as platforms for energy generation. Roadways, which form the backbone of modern transportation networks, experience continuous vehicular movement, vibrations, and heat dissipation, making them ideal candidates for energy harvesting.

II. TECHNOLOGIES FOR ENERGY HARVESTING

The concept of energy harvesting from roadways is supported by advancements in multiple technologies, each designed to capture and convert energy into usable electrical power.

A. PIEZOELECTRIC TECHNOLOGY

Piezoelectric systems utilize the ability of piezoelectric materials to generate an electric charge when subjected to mechanical stress. Materials such as lead zirconate titanate (PZT), quartz, barium titanate, and polyvinylidene fluoride (PVDF) are commonly used. These systems are embedded beneath road surfaces to capture energy from vehicular motion and convert it into electricity. Applications include powering streetlights, traffic signals, and sensors or storing energy for later use.

While piezoelectric systems offer high energy density and scalability, they face challenges such as high material costs, environmental sensitivity, and durability issues.

B. THERMOELECTRIC SYSTEMS

Thermoelectric systems rely on the Seebeck effect, which generates electricity from a temperature gradient. These systems utilize materials like bismuth telluride (Bi_2Te_3), lead telluride (PbTe), and silicon-germanium (SiGe) to convert heat from vehicle friction or sunlight into electrical energy. They are well-suited for powering low-energy devices such as sensors and communication modules. The systems are durable, reliable, and have no moving parts but are limited by low conversion efficiency and the need for significant temperature differences to function effectively.

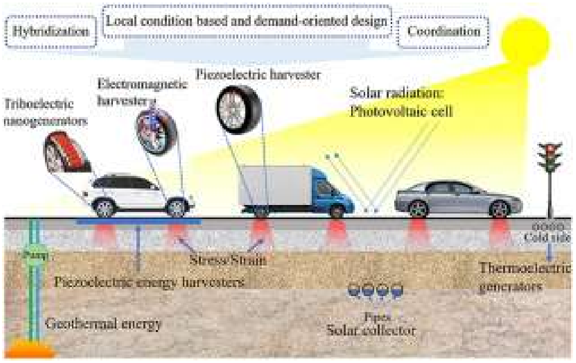


Fig .1 . Different energy harvesting

C. PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEMS

Photovoltaic systems capture solar energy and convert it into electricity using photovoltaic (PV) cells made from materials such as monocrystalline silicon, polycrystalline silicon, or thin-film solar cells. These systems can be embedded in road surfaces or installed alongside roadways to power urban infrastructure, including streetlights, traffic systems, and electric vehicle charging stations. They are clean and renewable but can face reduced efficiency in areas with high vehicular traffic or shading. Maintenance costs are also a concern due to wear and tear on road-embedded PV cells.

D. ELECTROMAGNETIC INDUCTION SYSTEMS

Electromagnetic induction systems harness the kinetic energy of moving vehicles to generate electricity using electromagnetic coils. These systems are typically installed in areas of high traffic flow, such as toll booths or speed breakers. The generated energy can be used to power local infrastructure or stored for later use. While the technology is simple and does not require continuous power supply, its efficiency depends on the volume of vehicular traffic, limiting its application in low-traffic areas.

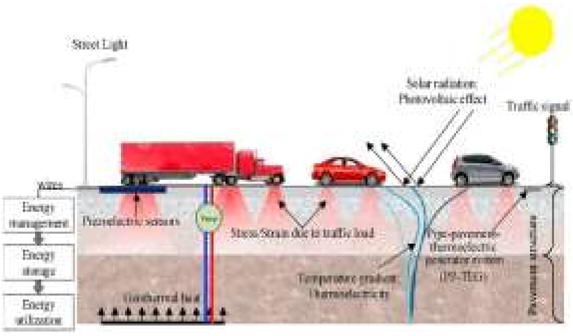


Fig .2 .Energy harvesting system

E. HYBRID ENERGY HARVESTING SYSTEMS

Hybrid energy harvesting systems integrate multiple technologies such as piezoelectric, thermoelectric, and photovoltaic systems to maximize energy capture. By leveraging different energy sources, these systems provide higher efficiency and reliability, especially in diverse environmental conditions like varying traffic loads or day-night cycles. Hybrid systems are ideal for smart cities aiming to optimize energy harvesting from roadways. However, the complexity of system integration and the high initial cost pose significant challenges to widespread deployment.

III. DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

The design and implementation of energy-harvesting systems from roadways involve a careful integration of technologies into the road infrastructure to optimize energy generation while ensuring durability and minimal disruption to traffic.

Site selection is crucial and should consider high-traffic areas like highways, toll plazas, and urban intersections for maximum energy capture. Environmental factors, such as sunlight availability and temperature gradients, also play a significant role.

Energy-harvesting devices like piezoelectric sensors, thermoelectric modules, photovoltaic cells, and electromagnetic coils are embedded in or mounted onto roadways. These systems are designed to withstand heavy traffic loads, vibrations, and weather conditions while maintaining road safety.

Piezoelectric systems are installed beneath the road surface to capture pressure from vehicles, while thermoelectric modules are placed in zones with significant heat generation, such as near intersections or toll booths.

Photovoltaic systems can be embedded into the road or mounted as solar canopies to harness sunlight effectively. Electromagnetic systems, such as coils and magnets, are strategically placed in speed bumps or high-traffic zones to convert kinetic energy from moving vehicles into electricity.

Energy storage units, including batteries and supercapacitors, are integrated to store the harvested energy for later use. These units are housed in protected enclosures to ensure durability and safety.

Power management systems distribute the harvested energy to various applications, such as streetlights, traffic signals, and electric vehicle charging stations. Integration with smart grids enhances efficiency and optimizes energy distribution.

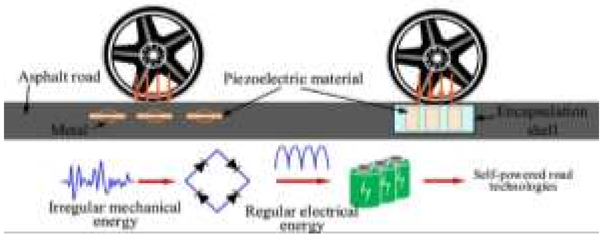


Fig .3 .Design of energy harvesting system

Cost analysis and funding strategies are developed to address the high initial investment required for materials, installation, and integration. The economic viability of these systems depends on their long-term energy output and durability.

Collaboration with urban planners, government bodies, and private entities is essential for the successful implementation and public acceptance of energy-harvesting roadways.

Hybrid systems are implemented to combine multiple technologies, ensuring maximum energy harvesting under diverse conditions, such as varying traffic volumes, day-night cycles, and weather changes.

IoT-enabled sensors and monitoring systems are integrated for real-time performance tracking, fault detection, and maintenance scheduling. These systems also provide valuable data for traffic management and urban planning.

IV. APPLICATIONS

- Powering streetlights, traffic signals, and pedestrian crossings using the energy harvested from roadways.
- Charging electric vehicles (EVs) through embedded or nearby charging stations powered by energy-harvesting systems.
- Supplying energy to IoT-enabled road sensors for real-time monitoring of traffic, road conditions, and environmental parameters.
- Providing backup power for critical infrastructure in urban areas, such as traffic management systems and emergency communication networks.

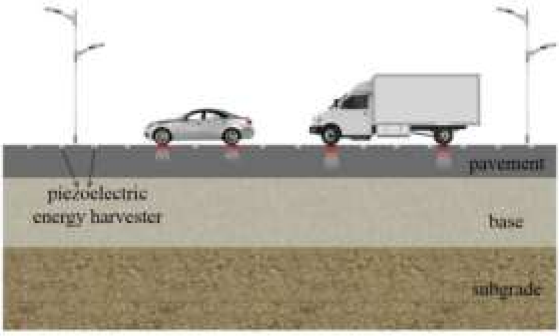


Fig .4 .Applications of energy harvesting system

- Enabling smart roadways with embedded systems to support autonomous vehicles and vehicle-to-infrastructure (V2I) communication.
- Supporting off-grid or remote roadways by providing sustainable energy for local infrastructure, reducing dependency on traditional power sources.
- Powering toll booths, surveillance cameras, and automated traffic enforcement systems.
- Storing energy in batteries or supercapacitors for later use in urban and rural infrastructure.
- Enhancing smart city initiatives by integrating harvested energy into the urban power grid to reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

V. CHALLENGES

- High initial costs for the installation and integration of energy-harvesting systems into existing road infrastructure.
- Durability concerns due to constant exposure to heavy traffic loads, vibrations, and environmental factors such as heat, rain, and snow.
- Maintenance challenges, as embedded systems may require frequent repairs or replacements, leading to potential road disruptions.
- Limited energy conversion efficiency in certain technologies, such as thermoelectric and piezoelectric systems, which affects their overall viability.
- Scalability issues, as expanding from pilot projects to large-scale implementations requires significant resources and planning.
- Complex integration of hybrid systems combining multiple energy-harvesting technologies, which demands advanced engineering and coordination.
- Reduced efficiency of photovoltaic systems in areas with shading, heavy traffic, or adverse weather conditions, such as cloudy or rainy climates.
- Traffic disruptions during the installation phase, especially in busy urban or high-traffic areas, can cause public inconvenience.
- Lack of standardization in the design and implementation of energy-harvesting systems, leading to compatibility issues with road infrastructure.

VI. CASE STUDIES

A. PIEZOELECTRIC ROADWAYS IN ISRAEL

- The Israeli company Innowattech developed a pilot project to test piezoelectric systems embedded in highways. The project involved placing piezoelectric sensors beneath a stretch of asphalt road to capture mechanical energy from vehicles passing overhead.
- The piezoelectric tiles were installed at a depth of a few centimeters under the road surface. As vehicles applied pressure, the sensors converted mechanical stress into electrical energy. The system was connected to energy storage units for power management.

Fig .5 .Energy harvesting system in Israel

- The system generated about 200 kWh of energy from a 1-kilometer stretch of road per day with moderate traffic. This energy was sufficient to power streetlights and small roadside devices.

B. SOLAR ROADWAYS IN FRANCE (WATTWAY PROJECT)

- The Wattway project, initiated by Colas, involved embedding photovoltaic panels into road surfaces to generate solar energy. A 1-kilometer solar road was constructed in Tourouvre-au-Perche, Normandy, France.

Fig .5 .Solar roadways in France

- Thin, durable photovoltaic panels were embedded into the road surface, covered with a transparent, skid-resistant material. The road was connected to the grid, and the energy generated was used to power nearby streetlights.
- The solar road generated approximately 150,000 kWh annually, enough to power streetlights in a small village. However, challenges such as reduced efficiency due to shading and wear from traffic were noted.

C. ELECTROMAGNETIC ENERGY HARVESTING IN TOKYO, JAPAN

- A pilot project in Tokyo used electromagnetic induction to harvest energy from pedestrian and vehicle movement. The system was installed in a busy train station and nearby roadways.

Fig .6 .Electromagnetic energy harvesting in Tokyo

- Electromagnetic generators were embedded beneath tiles at pedestrian crossings and roadways. As vehicles or pedestrians moved over the tiles, the system captured kinetic energy and converted it into electricity. The harvested energy powered LED displays and lighting in the area.
- The system generated enough energy to power small-scale applications like signage and lighting. It also demonstrated the potential for energy harvesting in urban environments with high pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

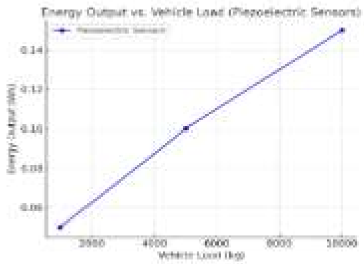
VII. TEST RESULTS AND GRAPHS

A. PIEZOELECTRIC ENERGY OUTPUT

Vehicle Load (kg)	Energy Output per Vehicle (Wh)
1000	0.05
5000	0.10
10000	0.15

Energy output from piezoelectric sensors under different vehicle loads on roadways.

- As the vehicle load increases, the energy output from the piezoelectric sensors also increases.
- At 1,000 kg, the energy output is 0.05 Wh.
- At 5,000 kg, the energy output increases to 0.10 Wh.
- At 10,000 kg, the energy output reaches 0.15 Wh.



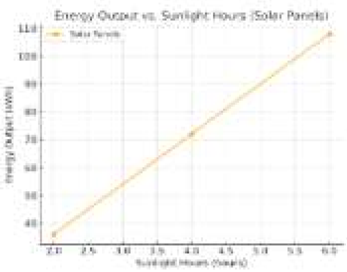
The graph illustrates a linear increase in energy output with the increase in vehicle load.

B. SOLAR PANEL ENERGY OUTPUT

Sunlight Hours per Day	Daily Energy Output (kWh)
2	36
4	72
6	108

Energy output from solar panels embedded in roadways based on varying sunlight hours.

- With 2 hours of sunlight, the energy output is 36 kWh.
- At 4 hours, the output increases to 72 kWh.
- At 6 hours, the energy output reaches 108 kWh.



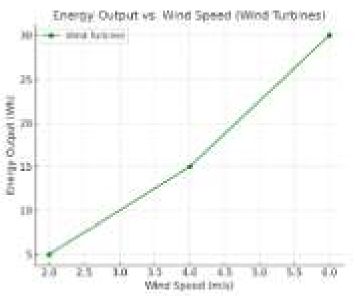
The graph demonstrates a linear relationship between the number of sunlight hours and the energy output from solar panels.

C. WIND ENERGY OUTPUT

Wind Speed (m/s)	Energy Output per Turbine (Wh)
2	5
4	15
6	30

Energy output from wind turbines powered by vehicle-induced wind speeds on roadways.

- With a wind speed of 2 m/s, the energy output is 5 Wh.
- At 4 m/s, the energy output increases to 15 Wh.
- At 6 m/s, the output reaches 30 Wh.



The graph shows that energy output from wind turbines increases with higher wind speeds.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Energy harvesting from roadways presents a promising and innovative approach to addressing the growing demand for sustainable energy solutions. As urbanization increases and the global focus shifts towards renewable energy, utilizing existing infrastructure, such as roadways, to generate energy offers a dual benefit of enhancing energy efficiency while also promoting environmental sustainability. Technologies such as piezoelectric systems, electromagnetic systems, and thermoelectric devices have demonstrated the potential to harness energy from vehicles' motion, heat from road surfaces, and vibrations. This energy can be used to power streetlights, traffic signals, sensors, and other critical infrastructure, reducing the reliance on traditional power sources and contributing to a reduction in carbon footprints.

IX. FUTURE SCOPE

- As urban infrastructure becomes smarter, energy-harvesting roadways can contribute to powering streetlights, traffic signals, and even public transportation systems. Integrating this technology with smart city grids can enhance energy efficiency and sustainability.
- The development of more efficient piezoelectric materials can increase the amount of energy harvested from vehicle vibrations and pressure. Innovations in nanomaterials or metamaterials could provide higher energy conversion efficiencies and better durability.
- Roads embedded with photovoltaic cells can generate electricity from sunlight, powering infrastructure or contributing to the energy grid. With advancements in solar technology, such systems could become more cost-effective and efficient.

- Energy-harvesting roadways could enable wireless charging for electric vehicles while they are in motion. This would help extend the range of EVs and reduce the need for frequent charging stops, promoting the adoption of electric vehicles.

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