### **Thermal and Elemental Analysis of Coconut Shell Powder as a Nature-Friendly Sustainable Material**

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| Received: dd/mm/2025Revised: dd/mm/2025Accepted: dd/mm/2025 | **ABSTRACT** Coconut Shell Powder (CSP) is a biodegradable lignocellulosic biomass material derived from coconut shells and comprising principally of cellulose, hemicellulose, and lignin. We characterize elemental and thermal properties of CSP to assess viability as a nature-based material in the agricultural and engineering-use. CHSO elemental analysis conducted on the CSP using a LECO CS744 and ONH836 revealed meaningful levels of carbon (40.1 to 42.1%), hydrogen (19.6 to 20.2%), and oxygen (33.3 to 34.7%) proved organic in character and of biomass origin, and a small amount of sulfur (0.084 to 0.090%) suggests that the material may be compatible with the environment to alleviate corrosion and soil acidification.Thermogravimetric analysis (TGA) under nitrogen modified to report on TGA results provides empirical evidence for a three-stage thermal degradation behavior of material. Initially, moisture loss exists in the range of 50 to 150 °C (6.097%), and the degradation of hemicellulose, cellulose, and lignin all occur in the range of 156 to 655 °C (75.369%). A small proportion of the material residue retained after thermal degradation with a stabilized state was found as 18.291% at 650 °C. All observations were congruent with literature performance of CSP defining the thermal stability and behavior.The elemental and thermal properties collectively confirmed the multipurpose potential for CSP. As a soil amendment, CSP is claimed to be a slow release material to the soil and improves soil moisture retention. In support of engineering applications, CSP could have potential as a natural filler, abrasive material, and provide insulation from thermal transfers. CSP overall is an adaptive material laying foundations to sustainable innovation in environmentally friendly applications for human use. |

**Keywords**:*Coconut Shell Powder (CSP), Thermogravimetric Analysis (TGA), CHSO Elemental Analysis, Lignocellulosic Biomass, Sustainable Material, Eco-friendly Applications*

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| **Nomenclature** |
| CSP | Coconut Shell Powder | DTG | Derivative Thermogravimetry |
| TGA | Thermogravimetric Analysis | °C | Degree Celsius |
| FTIR | Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy | cm⁻¹ | Reciprocal Centimeter  |
| ASTM | American Society for Testing and Materials | N₂ | Nitrogen Gas |

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### **INTRODUCTION**

 Coconut Shell Powder (CSP) is a lignocellulosic biomass material sourced from the hard endosperm of coconuts, and is an abundant, renewable, and environmentally-friendly resource[1]. With a molecular structure of cellulose, hemicellulose, and lignin, the material has embedded mechanical properties, thermal stability, and high organic carbon content for usages in a wide variety of industries, including: agriculture, engineering, and environmental managemen[1], [2]t. As a nature-friendly material, CSP is a biodegradable, non-toxic, and can act as a sustainable substitute for synthetic materials across multiple applications[3].

 The elemental composition of CSP analyzed via CHSO analysis is important for understanding the nature of the chemical, thermal, and mechanical properties, where the high carbon and oxygen content provide structural integrity and develop the ability to undergo controlled thermal degradation, while low sulfur content and trace nitrogen limit the environmental effect and suitability of soil uses[4], [5].

 Thermogravimetric analysis (TGA) provides additional information regarding the thermal stability of the material and overall multi-stage degradation pattern corresponding to the stepped burning of hemicellulose, cellulose, and lignin. The consistent thermal behavior, and relative high char yield further support the potential use of CSP as a sustainable option for soil amendment, biochar sources and the upgrading of materials involving reinforcement in composite products, or as a building material.

 The multipurpose features of CSP facilitate the transition from sustainable agriculture to engineering[6]. For agricultural purposes, it improves growth by increasing) soil fertility, moisture retention, and microbial health, and for engineering purposes, it provides a natural abrasive, filler, or heat insulator[6], [7].

 This twofold usage makes CSP a highly regarded eco-friendly product capable of advancing sustainability, providing eco-friendly materials with a lower impact on the environment, and achieving circular economy values.

 The summary of the elemental and thermal characterization indicates that CSP can be used in varying capacities in industrial and agricultural applications. Actual characterization is important as each of the components and thermal characteristics can provide insight into the effective application of CSP.

 Coconut Shell Powder (CSP) is a natural, sustainable product derived from coconut shells. CSP has wall tissue structure that is composed largely of cellulose, hemicellulose and lignin which give it strength and heat resistance. CSP holds very little moisture at sustained temperatures (Ngah et al., 2014), and the constituents of CSP have predictable degradation temperatures (180-350 degrees Celsius), which leads itself to many applications including biochar, thermal insulation, and energy recovery[8].

 The composition of CSP is essential for its diversity of applications. Okoya et al. (2020) reported that coconut shell char has more than 60% carbon content which indicates an exceptionally high organic carbon content. Rout (2013) and Fayyadh et al. (2025) also observed elevated carbon values in CSP[9], [10], [11].

 CSP is useful as an abrasive of natural origin, as a filler in composites, and as a slow-release fertilizer[7]. CSP contains low sulfur content, which helps to minimize corrosion of heat exchangers and to reduce soil acidification. Carbon-containing compounds, such as hydrogen and oxygen in the CSP sample, indicated that CSP is produced from a natural biodegradable source[12].

 The thermal properties of CSP also support this same multi-step breakdown behavior. Liyanage & Pieris (2015) reported that cellulose breakdown was about 338 °C, with about 16-25% residual char remaining[13]. In the present study the CSP residual mass was 18.291%, suggesting comparable results. Andezai et al. (2020) also observed slow breakdown for lignin at high temperatures, further indicating heat stability of CSP[14].

 To sum up findings from the preceding research, CSP appears to be a safe, high-carbon, and eco-friendly material with a variety of potential uses to improve soil structure, water retention, and biological capacity for agriculture and as an abrasive, filler, and an insulating material for engineering applications. The thermal behavior matches previous studies, and the elemental data aligns with previous studies, indicating that CSP can be a reliable and sustainable raw material for eco-friendly uses.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

 Coconut Shell Powder (CSP) was selected as a test case material in this study. The CSP was obtained as pre-ground from a local vendor in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India, as it would be easy for any reader to explore, obtain information, and trace the source for supply and quality assurance. The powder was particularly well-prepared as very fine, ground powder of uniform size, and thus the coconut shell powder did not require additional grinding or milling operations. The high-grade coconut shell powder used to conduct the study is shown as Figure 1.



Figure 1. Coconut Shell Powder sample along with the TGA and FTIR instruments

 Prior to carrying out any analyses using the coconut shell powder, the powder was kept in a sealed environment to minimize the likelihood of contamination from the surrounding atmosphere and to minimize any moisture absorption. Then, the powder was kept in a sealed container to maintain its properties and potentials. Then, a visual examination was conducted to ensure the cleanliness, homogeneity, and uniformity of the powder would have sufficient properties to be characterized beyond its uses in this study.

**2.1. Thermogravimetric Analysis (TGA)**

 Thermogravimetric Analysis (TGA) was used to investigate the thermal degradation and decomposition of the CSP in an inert atmosphere. This investigation allows for examination of sample weight loss as a function of temperature, revealing specific stages of decomposition due to hemicellulose, cellulose and lignin weight loss.

 Table 1: Parameters Used for TGA

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| **S.No** | **Parameter** | **Details** |
| 1 | Material | Coconut Shell Powder (CSP) |
| 2 | Sample Preparation | Ball-milled after grinding |
| 3 | Sample Weight | 20 mg |
| 4 | Heating Rate | 10 °C per minute |
| 5 | Temperature Range | 50 °C to 650 °C |
| 6 | Atmosphere | Nitrogen (N₂) |
| 7 | Gas Flow Rate | 20 ml/min |
| 8 | Crucible Type | Platinum |
| 9 | Standard Followed | ASTM E1131 |

**2.2 CHNSO Elemental Analysis**

 The elemental makeup of Coconut Shell Powder (CSP) was evaluated using analysers LECO CS744 and ONH836 at SAIF, IIT Madras (Chennai 600036). Each run the analysis used approximately 20mg of powdered sample and gained proportions of Carbon(C), Hydrogen(H), Nitrogen(N), Sulfur(S), and Oxygen(O) while establishing the organic and lignocellulosic nature of CSP.

 With carbon, the LECO CS744 Analyzer also measured sulfur, in the presence of various inorganic and carbonaceous materials. The sample is burned in oxygen and the carbon and sulfur produced carbon dioxide and sulfur dioxide gases. These gases are detected by infrared absorption methods providing mass- percent concentrations. The mass measurement range using the analyzers is 0.002-60mg (C) and 0.002-17.5mg (S) per 1g of sample.

 With oxygen, nitrogen, and hydrogen the LECO ONH836 Analyzer quantified in the presence of inert helium, leading to the production of carbon monoxide, nitrogen gas, and hydrogen gas, which are detected using an infrared sensor and thermal conductivity. The mass measurement ranges using the analyzers are 0.00005-50mg (O), 0.00005 -30mg (N), and 0.0001-2.5mg (H) per 1g of sample.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**3.1. Thermogravimetric Analysis (TGA) of Coconut Shell Powder (CSP)**

 Thermogravimetric analysis (TGA) of coconut shell powder (CSP) was performed in an inert nitrogen atmosphere to evaluate its thermal degradation behavior. The TGA analyses indicated the typical multiple degradation stages associated with lignocellulosic biomass, displaying CSP's thermal degradation behavior (Figure 2). The test was conducted at a heating rate of 10 °C/min from a temperature of 50 °C to a temperature of 650 °C. The analyses revealed three identifiable thermal degradation stages corresponding to the decomposition of hemicellulose, cellulose, and lignin, the primary organic fractions of CSP.



Figure 2: Thermogravimetric Analysis (TGA) graph of Coconut Shell Powder.

During the first stage (50-150 °C), CSP experienced a negligible weight loss of 6.097%, primarily due to evaporating physically bond water and volatile organic compounds with low boiling points. There were no indications of chemical decomposition, demonstrating that the material is thermally stable when heated at a moderate level. This first phase, labeled as the drying stage, shows CSP’s ability to survive in low to moderate high temperature environments, for application and situations where heating could be mild.

 The second stage, named active pyrolysis, covered the approximated temperature range of 156.07 °C to 655.37 °C where the material showed a large weight loss of 75.369%. This second stage of mass loss corresponds to the sequential thermal degradation of hemicellulose, cellulose, and lignin. The thermal degradation of hemicellulose begins at a lower temperature range. Some physical evidence of hemicellulose decomposition is showed by a small shoulder in the TGA curve at around 200 °C. Cellulose has a very rapid decomposition due to thermal degradation which shows a large peak around 300 °C, providing evidence that cellulose has crystalline properties that undergoes thermal degradation rapidly and indiscriminately. Lignin has a more complex control over thermal degradation, as it is an aromatic macromolecule that degrades slowly over a temperature range of around 350 °C to 500 °C. The slow thermal degradation and significant mass loss indicates that lignin is thermally stable and contributes to residues in the char.

 The last stage noted at 650 °C demonstrated a residual mass of 18.291%, mainly consisting of char and inorganic ash, indicative of stable carbonaceous material. This residual formation stage demonstrates that CSP generates a significant amount of thermally stable residues under conditions used for pyrolysis. The TGA data for CSP is summarized in Table 2 as follows:

 Table 2: Thermogravimetric Data Summary for Coconut Shell Powder

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| **S No.** | **Temperature Range (°C)** | **Observed Mass Loss (%)** | **Interpretation** |
| 1 | 50 – 150 | 6.097 | Loss of moisture and low-boiling volatiles |
| 2 | 156.07 – 655.37 | 75.369 | Decomposition of hemicellulose, cellulose, lignin |
| 3 | Residual Mass at 650 °C | 18.291 | Char and ash (thermally stable residue) |

 Analysis of the results obtained through the stages of pyrolysis revealed that the drying stage occurs due to moisture becoming evaporated and the active pyrolysis phase signifies the rapid thermal decomposition of cellulose and the slower degradation of the lignin component. The stage of residual formation highlights the occurrence of considerable amounts of char, facilitating high thermal and mechanical stability. Comparisons to the existing literature also showed a good agreement. For instance, Ngah et al. (2014) showed similar moisture losses below 150 °C and major degradation of hemicellulose in-between 200–350 °C[8]. The authors also reported a peak degradation of cellulose (336 °C, similar to 338 °C in this study) and a flexible char residual, characterized between 16–25%, which corresponds well to the current result of 18.291%. Rout (2013) and Andezai et al. (2020) also confirmed that pyrolysis follows a slow degradation of lignin, with thermal resistances up to 500–900 °C, identifying CSP's stability as a highly reliable lignocellulosic biochar[10], [14].

 Overall, the consistent multi-phase decomposing behavior of CSP demonstrated the stability of a lignocellulosic material, with predictable thermal degradation, i.e. as demonstrated in, thermogravimetric analysis (TGA), which displays a controlled reaction with minimal weight loss in the early stages of decomposition, indicating minimal exothermic events in the inert atmosphere in this study. The character of stability also indicates that CSP should be easily handled in thermochemical, pyrolytic, and energy-related applications, while still allowing for an efficient biomass char production. The summary of thermal results and substantial residual weight highlights the stability of CSP subjected to moderate to high temperatures, without the degradation of the structural integrity, such that it would be ideally suited for a wide range of applications.

 In agriculture, CSP’s high level of carbon and structural integrity allow it to function as a slow-release organic soil amendment to improve soil fertility, water-retention capacity and greater overall soil health in a sustainable manner[6], [15]. Its predictable thermal behavior means that are able to be released in a slow, gradual manner, which has implications for longer-lasting effects to enhance soils. In engineering, CSP’s mechanical hardness and thermal stability are applicable not only as a natural abrasive associated with AJM processes but also have applications in thermal insulation composites, biochar, as a filler in polymer composites, and in green construction materials[16], [17]. The dual-purpose characteristics of CSP, both as a sustainable agricultural input or resource, to an engineering material resource, supports its position as an environmentally conscious and multifunctional material. The material's strength of performance is applicable in thermal, mechanical, and chemical applications, making it an attractive prospect as an innovative material solution for applications with a premium on sustainability and functionally efficient performance[18], [19].

 The multifunctional potential of CSP for agriculture and engineering is not unique to this study. Fayyadh et al., (2025) found that coconut shell biochar has a high carbon content and stable structure, improving soil fertility and compatibility in composite and insulation materials. Rout (2013) shared that CSP exhibits strong thermal stability and mechanical hardness that can be used for pyrolysis and as reinforcement in engineering composite products. Okoya et al. (2020), also demonstrated CSP has strong adsorption ability and durability of chemical compounds, lending to its sustainable use in various products also as fillers, abrasives, and soil conditioners. These studies confirm CSP's multifunctional, sustainable ability to serve as a soil amendment and a biomaterial for engineering use[9], [11], [20].

**3.2. CHSO Elemental Analysis**

 Coconut shell powder (CSP) is an alternative biomass-based natural product that has potential in applications in the fields of agriculture, engineering, and environmental sustainability. An elemental analysis was performed with LECO CS 744 and ONH 836 analyzers at SAIF, IITM, Chennai 600036 and the results were summarized in Table 3.

 Table 3: CHSO Elemental Composition of Coconut Shell Powder (CSP) (%)

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| **S No** | **Element** | **Content (%)** |
| 1 | Carbon (C) | 40.1 – 42.1 |
| 2 | Sulfur (S) | 0.0841 – 0.0901 |
| 2 | Oxygen (O) | 33.3 – 34.7 |
| 4 | Hydrogen (H) | 19.6 – 20.2 |

 The carbon levels were between 40.1% and 42.1%, indicating significant organic carbon that imparts hardness and durability. Therefore, CSP is an excellent choice as a natural abrasive in an engineering context and also a soil conditioner and slow release organic amendment in agriculture.

 The sulfur levels were low, 0.0841% to 0.0901%, therefore reducing the risk of soil acidification or potential corrosion on machinery which would affect agricultural tools and storage systems.

 Oxygen levels were 33.3% to 34.7%, with hydrogen levels being 19.6% to 20.2%, confirming the biomass origin, being made up primarily of cellulose, hemicellulose, and lignin. When CSP is applied as an organic amendment into agroecosystems, the natural polymers will improve soil porosity, water retention capabilities, and microbial activity, thus enhancing sustainable farming practices.

CSP can also serve as a binder in composting processes as it improves the cohesion and nutrient retention capability of organic fertilizers[21]. Due to the organic nature of CSP, pre-treatment of some sort may also be needed, and this may include drying or sieving before storage or larger scale application to reduce clumping to improve flowability for agricultural or industrial and engineering applications[6].

 Apart from agricultural uses, cash crop straw and residue (CSP) has potential engineering applications serving as a natural abrasive for abrasive jet machining (AJM), reinforcement in composite materials, or biomass-derived fillers for sustainable construction or manufacturing. The environmentally sustainable and biodegradable aspects of CSP make it a cost-effective and environmentally-responsible alternative to synthetic materials; and it is thermally stable, which supports safe usage over extended time frames[6], [7], [11].

 The carbon content for the CSP was in the range of 40.1% to 42.1%, indicating plenty of organic carbon, which provides hardness and durability. CSP has high hardness, allowing it to be used effectively, as a natural abrasive, in abrasive jet machining / polishing / surface finishing applications. Alongside engineering applications, CSP can be used as a soil conditioner, slow-release organic fertilizer, composting additive, or precursor for biochar, all of which can help improve soil fertility and moisture retention.

 The biodegradable / biomass-based composition of CSP also makes it suitable for sustainable construction fillers, ecofriendly-packaging, and natural reinforcement in composite materials, suggesting a potentially broad functional applications across agriculture, industry, and environmental sustainability[4], [11].

 The elemental analysis reported here is consistent with earlier studies. For example, Okoya et al. (2020) found that coconut shell char had a carbon content of 60.08% and was confirmed as the most abundant element due to the pyrolytic conversion of organic matter at high temperatures[9]. Rout (201) also reported similar elemental patterns when looking at the pyrolysis of coconut shell, where carbon was observed to have a high yield, while hydrogen and oxygen were in low fractions, demonstrating the lignocellulosic characteristics and stability at elevated temperatures[10]. Most recently, Fayyadh et al. (2025) reported that coconut shell biochar contained 69.9% carbon, confirming the high carbonization level and the prevalence of an aromatic structure with possible enhanced stability and adsorptive capabilities[11]. The close literature comparability with the elemental data from this analysis suggests that the elemental results from CSP is valid and reliable, thus confirming the potential of CSP as a sustainable and high carbon biomass resource.

 Again, the thermal and elemental characteristics of coconut shell powder confirm it is a versatile, sustainable, and nature-friendly material for agriculture, environment use, and many engineering fields. The multifunctionality makes it an ideal candidate for practical application and research in sustainable technology.

**CONCLUSION**

 Coconut Shell Powder (CSP), has been authenticated as a biodegradable, lignocellulosic, and ecologically acceptable substance with major multi-functional abilities. Elements analyzed by CHNSO verify the high contents of carbon (40.1-42.1%), hydrogen (19.6-20.2%), and oxygen (33.3-34.7%), along with little sulfur (0.084-0.090%) confirming it as a biomass origin and environmental suitability. The TGA analysis displays the thermal degradation in three stages, where losses of moisture occurred in the temperature range of 50-150°C (6.097%), losses from thermal degradation of hemicellulose, cellulose and lignin from (156-655°C) resulted in a mass loss of 75.369%, and a final char residue of 18.291% was present at 650°C, which confirms thermal resistance. Because of these properties, CSP has advantageously been applied to agricultural uses, such as soil amendment, slow-release organic fertilizer, and enhanced microbial activity; and engineering applications as natural abrasive, filler, biochar, and thermal insulating materials. The consistency with literature supports the conclusion that CSP is a high-carbon sustainable biomass resource. It can be concluded that CSP is a valuable multi-use, green material for sustainable agriculture, industrial uses, and environmental resources.

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