



**Effects of Cobalt Stearate on the Properties of  
Compatibilized Low Density Polyethylene/  
Jackfruit Seeds Flour Blends**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
DECLARATION	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	x
LIST OF ABBREVIATION	xvi
ABSTRAK	xvii
ABSTRACT	xviii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Research Background	1
1.2 Problem Statement	6
1.3 Significance of Study	7
1.4 Research Objective	8
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	9
2.1 Research Background	9
2.2 Low Density Polyethylene (LDPE)	9

2.2.1	Characteristics of LDPE	10
2.2.2	Comparison between LDPE and Other Polyethylenes	11
2.3	Polymer Blends	13
2.3.1	Type of Blends	15
	(a) Polyolefins/ Polysaccharides Blends	15
	(b) Polyolefins/Protein Blends	18
2.4	Compatibilizer of Polymer Blends	20
2.4.1	Adipic Acid (AA)	23
2.4.2	Citric Acid (CA)	24
2.4.3	Polyethylene Grafted Maleic Anhydride (PE-g-MA)	25
2.4.4	Epoxidized Natural Rubber (ENR 50)	27
2.5	Oxo- biodegradable Polymer	28
2.5.1	Oxo- biodegradable of Carbon Backbone Polymers	30
2.5.2	Cobalt Stearate (CS)	32
2.6	Biodegradable Plastic	33
<b>CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY</b>		36
3.1	Materials	36
3.2	Sample Preparation	37
3.2.1	Jackfruit Seeds Flour (JSF) Preparation	37
3.2.2	LDPE and LDPE/JSF Blends Sample Preparation	37
3.3	Jackfruit Seed Flour (JSF) Characterization	40
3.4	Testing and Characterization of LDPE and LDPE/JSF Blends	43
3.4.1	Tensile Properties	43

3.4.2	Thermogravimetric Analysis (TGA)	43
3.4.3	Differential Scanning Calorimetry (DSC)	44
3.4.4	Fourier Transforms Infrared (FTIR) Spectrometry Analysis	45
3.4.5	Morphology	45
3.4.6	Water Absorption	46
3.4.7	Natural Weathering	46
3.4.8	Soil Burial	47
<b>CHAPTER 4 EFFECT OF ADIPIC ACID (AA) AS A</b>		<b>48</b>
<b>COMPATIBILIZER ON THE PROPERTIES OF LDPE/JSF BLENDS</b>		
4.1	Introduction	48
4.2	Properties of LDPE and LDPE/JSF Blends	49
4.2.1	Tensile and Morphological Properties	49
4.2.2	DSC Analysis	54
4.2.3	TGA Analysis	56
4.2.4	FTIR Spectrometry Analysis	59
4.2.5	Water Absorption	61
4.3	Natural Weathering of LDPE and LDPE/JSF Blends	62
4.3.1	Tensile and Morphological Properties	62
4.3.2	DSC Analysis	68
4.3.3	FTIR Spectrometry Analysis	70
4.4	Soil Burial of LDPE and LDPE/JSF Blends	71
4.4.1	Tensile and Morphological Properties	71

4.4.2	DSC Analysis	78
4.4.3	FTIR Spectrometry Analysis	79
<b>CHAPTER 5 EFFECT OF CITRIC ACID (CA) AS A COMPATIBILIZER ON PROPERTIES OF LDPE/ JSF</b>		<b>82</b>
5.1	Introduction	82
5.2	Properties of the LDPE/JSF/CA Blends	83
5.2.1	Tensile and Morphological Properties	83
5.2.2	DSC Analysis	91
5.2.3	TGA Analysis	93
5.2.4	FTIR Spectrometry Analysis	95
5.2.5	Water Absorption	98
5.3	Natural Weathering of LDPE and LDPE/JSF Blends	99
5.3.1	Tensile and Morphological Properties	99
5.3.2	DSC Analysis	103
5.3.3	FTIR Spectrometry Analysis	104
5.4	Soil Burial of LDPE and LDPE/JSF Blends	106
5.4.1	Tensile and Morphological Properties	106
5.4.2	DSC Analysis	113
5.4.3	FTIR Spectrometry Analysis	114
<b>CHAPTER 6 EFFECT OF COBALT STEARATE ON PROPERTIES OF UNCOMPATIBILIZED AND CA COMPATIBILIZED LDPE/JSF BLENDS</b>		
6.1	Introduction	116

6.2	Natural Weathering of LDPE and LDPE/JSF/CS Blends	117
6.2.1	Tensile and Morphological Properties	117
6.2.2	DSC Analysis	125
6.2.3	FTIR Spectrometry Analysis	126
6.3	Soil Burial of LDPE and LDPE/JSF/CS Blends	
6.3.1	Tensile and Morphological Properties	127
6.3.2	DSC Analysis	136
6.3.3	FTIR Spectrometry Analysis	137
<b>CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION</b>		139
7.1	Conclusion	139
7.2	Commercialization Potential	141
7.3	Recommendations and Future Works	142
<b>REFERENCES</b>		143
<b>APPENDIX</b>		159
List of Publication		159
List of Awards		163

## LIST OF TABLES

NO		PAGE
2.1	Properties, production and uses of polyethylene	12
2.2	Definition of biodegradable plastic	35
3.1	List of materials and their properties	36
3.2	Purpose, instruments and model	37
3.2	Composition of LDPE/JSF with and without compatibilizer, AA or CA	35
3.3	Composition of LDPE/JSF blends with and without compatibilizer, AA or CA	40
3.4	Average temperature, rainfall, and relative humidity for the Perlis state	47
4.1	Amylose content of JSF as determined by three method of analysis	50
4.2	Thermal properties analysis for LDPE/JSF and LDPE/JSF/AA blends	56
4.3	TGA data for pure LDPE, LDPE/JSF and LDPE/JSF/ AA blends	58
4.4	Retention of tensile properties for LDPE and LDPE/JSF blends after 9 months weathering	63
4.5	DSC result of LDPE and LDPE/JSF blends after different period of weathering test	69
4.6	Retention of tensile properties for LDPE/JSF blends after 9 months soil burial test	74



4.7	DSC result of LDPE and LDPE/JSF blends after different period of soil burial composing	79
5.1	Thermal properties analysis for LDPE/JSF and LDPE/JSF/CA blends	89
5.2	TGA data for neat LDPE, LDPE/JSF and LDPE/JSF/CA blends	91
5.3	Retention of tensile properties for LDPE and LDPE/JSF blends after 9 months weathering	98
5.4	DSC result of LDPE and LDPE/JSF blends after different period of weathering test	104
5.5	Retention of tensile properties for LDPE/JSF blends after 9 months soil burial test	109
5.6	DSC result of LDPE and LDPE/JSF blends after different period of soil burial composing	113
6.1	Retention of tensile properties for LDPE/JSF/CS blends after 6 months of natural weathering	119
6.2	DSC result of LDPE/JSF/CS blends with and without CA compatibilizer after different period of weathering test	125
6.3	Retention of tensile properties for LDPE/JSF/CS blends with and without CA compatibilizer after 6 months of soil burial	130
6.4	DSC result of LDPE/JSF/CS blends with and without CA compatibilizer after different period of soil burial test	137

## LIST OF FIGURES

NO		PAGE
1.1	Major usage of plastics in industry	1
2.1	Chemical structure of glycerol	17
2.2	Schematic representation of the general relationship between Polymers blends	22
2.3	Chemical structure of AA	23
2.4	Chemical structure of CA	24
2.5	Chemical structure of CS	32
2.6	General mechanism of plastic biodegradation	34
3.1	Compatibilizer preparation of AA	38
3.2	Overall process for natural weathering and soil burial test	39
4.1	Tensile strength of LDPE and LDPE/JSF blends with and without AA compatibilizer	49
4.2	Elongation at break ( $E_b$ ) of LDPE and LDPE/JSF blends with and without AA compatibilizer	51
4.3	Tensile fracture surfaces (x500 magnification) of LDPE and LDPE/JSF blends with and without AA compatibilizer: (a) neat LDPE, (b) 3% LDPE/JSF, (c) 20 %LDPE/ JSF, (d) 3% LDPE/JSF/AA and (e) 20% LDPE/JSF/AA content.	52
4.4	Comparison of Young's modulus with and without AA for the LDPE/JSF blends	53
4.5	DSC Melting thermograms of pure LDPE, LDPE/ 20% JSF and LDPE/ 20% JSF/ AA blends	54

4.6	DSC cooling thermograms of neat LDPE, LDPE/20% JSF and LDPE/20% JSF/AA blends	55
4.7	Weight loss versus temperature of LDPE, LDPE/JSF, and LDPE/ JSF/AA blends.	57
4.8	FTIR spectra of LDPE, LDPE/JSF and LDPE/JSF/AA blends	59
4.9	Proposed reaction scheme between AA and JSF	60
4.10	Water absorption of LDPE/ JSF blends with and AA without compatibilizer	61
4.11	Tensile strength of LDPE for uncompatilized and compatibilized LDPE/JSF blends from 0 to 9 months weathering	62
4.12	$E_b$ of LDPE, uncompatibilized and AA compatibilized LDPE/JSF blends from 0 to 9 months weathering	64
4.13	SEM micrographs (500x) of weathered surface for with and without compatibilizer LDPE/JSF blends with JSF content of (a) 0 wt%, (b) 3 wt %, (c) 20 wt% after 3 months; (d) 0 wt%, (e) 3 wt%, (f) 20 wt% after 6 months; (g) 0 wt%, (h) 3 wt%, (i) 20 wt% after 9 months of weathering for uncompatibilized LDPE/JSF blends, (j) 3 wt %, (k) 20 wt% after 3 months; l) 3 wt%, (m) 20 wt% after 6 months; (n) 3 wt%, (o) 20 wt% after 9 months of weathering for AA compatibilized LDPE/JSF blends.	66
4.14	Young's modulus of LDPE, LDPE/JSF and AA compatibilized LDPE/JSF blends from 0 to 9 months weathering	68
4.15	IR spectra of LDPE, uncompatibilized and compatibilized LDPE/JSF blends over 9 months of natural weathering	71
4.16	Tensile strength of LDPE, uncompatilized and compatibilized LDPE/JSF blends from 0 to 9 months soil burial	72
4.17	$E_b$ of LDPE, uncompatibilized and AA compatibilized LDPE/JSF	73

blends from 0 to 9 months soil burial

4.18	Figure 4.18: SEM micrographs (500x) of soil burial surface for with and without compatibilizer LDPE/JSF blends with JSF content of (a) 0 wt%, (b) 3 wt %, (c) 20 wt% after 3 months; (d) 0 wt%, (e) 3 wt%, (f) 20 wt% after 6 months; (g) 0 wt%, (h) 3 wt%, (i) 20 wt% after 9 months of soil burial for uncompatibilized LDPE/JSF blends, (j) 3 wt %, (k) 20 wt% after 3 months; l) 3 wt%, (m) 20 wt% after 6 months; (n) 3 wt%, (o) 20 wt% after 9 months of soil burial for AA compatibilized LDPE/JSF blends.	75
4.19	Young's modulus of LDPE, uncompatibilized and AA compatibilized LDPE/JSF blends from 0 to 9 months soil burial	77
4.20	IR spectra of LDPE, uncompatibilized and AA compatibilized LDPE/JSF blends over 9 months of soil burial	80
5.1	Tensile strength of LDPE and LDPE/JSF blends with and without CA compatibilizer.	83
5.2	$E_b$ of LDPE and LDPE/JSF blends with and without CA compatibilizer	84
5.3	Tensile fracture surfaces (x500 magnification) of LDPE and LDPE/JSF blends with and without CA compatibilizer: (a) neat LDPE, (b) 3% LDPE/JSF, (c) 20 %LDPE/ JSF, (d) 3% LDPE/JSF/CA and (e) 20% LDPE/JSF/CA content.	85
5.4	Comparison of Young's Modulus LDPE/JSF blends and LDPE/JSF/CA blends in various JSF content	86
5.5	DSC melting thermograms of neat LDPE, LDPE/ JSF and LDPE/ JSF/CA blends	88
5.6	DSC cooling thermograms of neat LDPE, LDPE/ JSF and LDPE/ JSF/CA blends	88
5.7	Weight loss versus temperature of LDPE, LDPE/JSF, and LDPE/ JSF/CA blends	91
5.8	FTIR spectra of LDPE, LDPE/JSF and LDPE/JSF/CA blends	93
5.9	Proposed reaction mechanism between JSF and CA	94

5.10	Water absorption of LDPE with and without CA compatibilizer LDPE/JSF blends	96
5.11	Tensile strength of LDPE, uncompatibilized and CA compatilized LDPE/JSF blends from 0 to 9 months weathering	97
5.12	$E_b$ of LDPE, uncompatibilized and CA compatibilized LDPE/JSF blends from 0 to 9 months weathering	99
5.13	SEM micrographs (500x) of weathered surface for with and without compatibilizer LDPE/JSF blends with JSF content of (a) 0 wt%, (b) 3 wt %, (c) 20 wt% after 3 months; (d) 0 wt%, (e) 3 wt%, (f) 20 wt% after 6 months; (g) 0 wt%, (h) 3 wt%, (i) 20 wt% after 9 months of weathering for uncompatibilized LDPE/JSF blends, (j) 3 wt %, (k) 20 wt% after 3 months; l) 3 wt%, (m) 20 wt% after 6 months; (n) 3 wt%, (o) 20 wt% after 9 months of weathering for CA compatibilized LDPE/JSF blends.	100
5.14	Young's modulus of LDPE, uncompatibilized and CA compatibilized LDPE/JSF blends from 0 to 9 months weathering	103
5.15	IR spectra of LDPE, uncompatibilized and CA compatibilized LDPE/JSF blends over 9 months of natural weathering	105
5.16	Tensile strength of LDPE, uncompatilized and CA compatibilized LDPE/JSF blends from 0 to 9 months soil burial	106
5.17	$E_b$ of LDPE, uncompatibilized and CA compatibilized LDPE/JSF blends from 0 to 9 months soil burial	108
5.18	SEM micrographs (500x) of soil burial surface for with and without compatibilizer LDPE/JSF blends with JSF content of (a) 0 wt%, (b) 3 wt %, (c) 20 wt% after 3 months; (d) 0 wt%, (e) 3 wt%, (f) 20 wt% after 6 months; (g) 0 wt%, (h) 3 wt%, (i) 20 wt% after 9 months of soil burial for uncompatibilized LDPE/JSF blends, (j) 3 wt %, (k) 20 wt% after 3 months; l) 3 wt%, (m) 20 wt% after 6 months; (n) 3 wt%, (o) 20 wt% after 9 months of soil burial for CA compatibilized LDPE/JSF blends.	110
5.19	Young's modulus of LDPE, uncompatibilized and CA compatibilized LDPE/JSF blends from 0 to 9 months soil burial	112
5.20	IR spectra of LDPE, uncompatibilized and CA compatibilized	114

	LDPE/JSF blends over 9 months of soil burial	
6.1	Tensile strength of LDPE and uncompatibilized LDPE/JSF/CS blends from 0 to 9 months weathering	117
6.2	Tensile strength of LDPE and CA compatibilized LDPE/JSF/CS blends from 0 to 9 months weathering	118
6.3	$E_b$ of LDPE and uncompatibilized LDPE/JSF/CS blends from 0 to 9 months weathering	120
6.4	$E_b$ of LDPE and CA compatibilized LDPE/JSF/CS blends from 0 to 9 months weathering	120
6.5	SEM micrographs (500x) of weathered surface for with and without compatibilizer LDPE/JSF/CS blends with JSF content of (a) 0 wt%, (b) 3 wt %, (c) 20 wt% after 3 months; (d) 0 wt%, (e) 3 wt%, (f) 20 wt% after 6 months; (g) 0 wt%, (h) 3 wt%, (i) 20 wt% after 9 months of weathering for uncompatibilized LDPE/JSF blends, (j) 3 wt %, (k) 20 wt% after 3 months; l) 3 wt%, (m) 20 wt% after 6 months; (n) 3 wt%, (o) 20 wt% after 9 months of weathering for CA compatibilized LDPE/JSF/CS blends	122
6.6	Young's modulus of LDPE and uncompatibilized LDPE/JSF/CS blends from 0 to 9 months weathering	124
6.7	Young's modulus of LDPE and CA compatibilized LDPE/JSF/CS blends from 0 to 9 months weathering	124
6.8	IR spectra of uncompatibilized and compatibilized CS blends over 9 months of natural weathering	127
6.9	Tensile strength of JSF loading for uncompatilized CS blends from 0 to 9 months soil burial	128
6.10	Tensile strength of JSF loading for compatibilized CS blends from 0 to 9 months soil burial	129
6.11	$E_b$ of LDPE and uncompatibilized LDPE/JSF/CS blends from 0 to 9 months soil burial	131
6.12	$E_b$ of LDPE and CA compatibilized LDPE/JSF/CS blends from	131

	0 to 9 months soil burial	
6.13	SEM micrographs (500x) of soil burial surface for with and without compatibilizer LDPE/JSF/CS blends with JSF content of (a) 0 wt%, (b) 3 wt %, (c) 20 wt% after 3 months; (d) 0 wt%, (e) 3 wt%, (f) 20 wt% after 6 months; (g) 0 wt%, (h) 3 wt%, (i) 20 wt% after 9 months of soil burial for uncompatibilized LDPE/JSF/CS blends, (j) 3 wt %, (k) 20 wt% after 3 months; l) 3 wt%, (m) 20 wt% after 6 months; (n) 3 wt%, (o) 20 wt% after 9 months of soil burial for CA compatibilized LDPE/JSF/CS blends.	133
6.14	Young's modulus of LDPE/CS and uncompatibilized LDPE/JSF/CS blends from 0 to 9 months soil burial.	135
6.15	Young's modulus of LDPE/CS and compatibilized LDPE/JSF/CS blends from 0 to 9 months soil burial	136
6.16	IR spectra of LDPE/CS, uncompatibilized and CA compatibilized LDPE/JSF/CS blends over 9 months of soil burial	138

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

LDPE	Low Density Polyethylene
JFS	Jackfruit Seed
SEM	Scanning electron microscope
ASTM	American Standard Testing and Material
MA	Maleic anhydride
MA-g-PLA	Maleic anhydride grafted polylactic acid
CO <sub>2</sub>	Carbon Dioxide
FTIR	Fourier transforms infrared spectroscopy
DSC	Differential Scanning Calorimetry
TGA	Thermogravimetric analysis
ENR	Epoxidised Natural Rubber
AA	Aspic Acid
CA	Citric Acid
NW	Natural Weathering
SB	Soil Burial



## **Kesan Kobalt Stearate Pada Agen Penserasi dalam Polietilena Berketumpatan Rendah/ Tepung Biji Nangka**

### **ABSTRAK**

Kesan asid adipic (AA) dan asid sitrik (CA) kepada sifat ketegangan, morfologi, dan sifat haba oleh polietilena berketumpatan rendah (LDPE)/ tepung biji nangka (JSF) telah dikaji. Pada mulanya, LDPE telah dicampurkan dengan pelbagai kandungan JSF selama 10 minit dengan menggunakan pengadun dalaman. Sifat tegangan telah diuji dengan menggunakan tensometer instron mengikut ASTM D638. Kekuatan tegangan dan pemanjangan pada takat putus ( $E_b$ ) telah meningkat dengan penambahan AA dan CA sebagai agen penserasi, seperti yang dibuktikan oleh analisis morfologi dengan menggunakan imbasan elektron mikroskop. Modulus juga meningkat dengan kandungan JSF sehingga 3 wt% dan menurun dengan peningkatan berat kandungan JSF. Penghabluran dan penghabluran suhu campuran meningkat dengan penambahan AA dan CA, berbanding dengan campuran tanpa agen penserasi. Kestabilan haba pula mencatatkan penurunan nilai dengan peningkatan kandungan JSF. Walau bagaimanapun, AA dan CA menambah baik kestabilan terma LDPE /JSF. Penyerapan air juga telah meningkat dengan peningkatan kandungan JSF. Tahap degradasi sampel telah diuji dengan ujian penanaman tanah dan pencuciaan sampel dalam pelbagai cuaca selama 9 bulan. Melalui ujian tersebut, didapati bahawa untuk komposisi JSF yang lebih tinggi, kadar degradasi meningkat. Sampel dengan campuran agen penserasi mencatatkan kadar proses degradasi yang lebih rendah daripada sampel campuran tanpa agen penserasi. Akhir sekali, pro-oksidan kobalt stearat (CS) telah ditambah untuk mempercepatkan proses degradasi. Oleh itu, kekuatan tegangan dan  $E_b$  daripada campuran CS lebih mudah terdegradasi berbanding dengan campuran tanpa CS. Disamping itu, semasa ujian pencuciaan dan penanaman tanah, sampel menunjukkan peningkatan dalam kadar penghabluran dengan penambahan CS di dalam campuran, tetapi dengan penambahan agen penserasi, penghabluran telah meningkat.

## **Effect of Cobalt Stearate on the Properties of Compatibilized Low Density Polyethylene/ Jackfruit Seeds Flour Blends**

### **ABSTRACT**

The effect of adipic acid (AA) and citric acid (CA) on the tensile, morphological, and thermal properties of low-density polyethylene (LDPE)/ jackfruit seeds flour (JSF) was investigated. Initially, the LDPE was mixed with various JSF contents for 10 minutes by using internal mixer (Brabender). The tensile properties were evaluated by using Universal Testing Machine (UTM) according to ASTM D638. The tensile strength and elongation at the break ( $E_b$ ) were significantly improved by the addition of AA and CA, as evidenced by morphological analysis using scanning electron microscopy (SEM). On the other hand, the Young's modulus increased with JSF content up to 3 wt% and decreased thereafter. The crystallinity and crystallization temperatures of the blends increase with the incorporation of AA and CA, compared with uncompatibilized blends. The thermal stability of the mixture was lower with increasing JSF content. However, AA and CA had improved the thermal stability of LDPE/JSF blends. The water absorption increased with increasing amount of JSF content. The degradability of the sample had been investigated for 9 months soil burial and natural weathering test. It was found that for higher JSF content resulted in higher degradation. In the presence of compatibilizer, the interfacial adhesion was significantly improved and lower the degradation duration. Lastly, cobalt stearate (CS) had been added as pro-oxidant in order to accelerate the degradation process. The tensile strength and  $E_b$  of the blends with CS were more susceptible to degradation compare to the blends without CS. Meanwhile, during weathering and soil burial test, the crystallinity increased with the addition of CS in the blends.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Background

Polyethylene has achieved a dominant position as a packaging material because of its relatively low cost, versatile properties including high tensile strength, elongation at break, good barrier properties against water borne organisms, lower cost, higher energy, effectiveness, light weight and good water resistance. The products from polyethylene become famous in over the decade. So, during the past two decades the quantity of plastics material used in the packing application has increased annually at a phenomenal rate. However, polyethylene is a non-biodegradable plastic which has high life span. It has been a target of much criticism due to its lack of degradability especially the plastic bag and agriculture bag product (Sirocic et al., 2014). Figure 1.1 (Steven, 2002) illustrated the major usage of plastics in the industries.

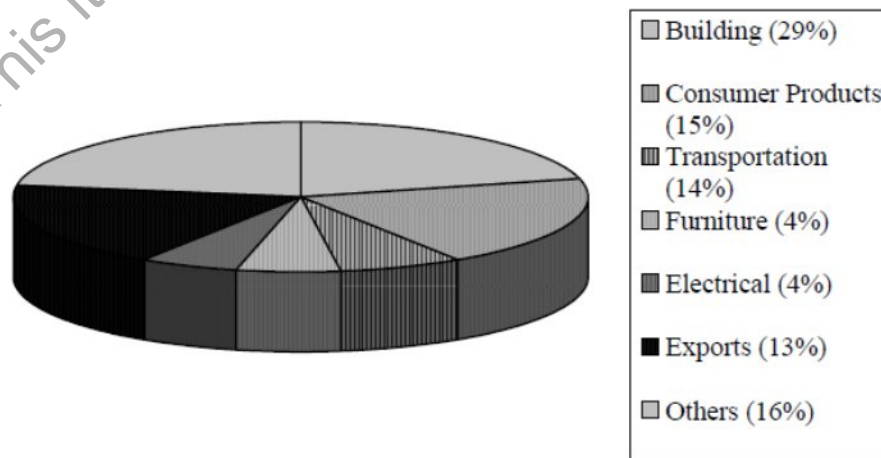


Figure 1.1: Major usage of plastics in industry

Besides that, the projected life-span of polymer products varies from several months for example packaging products, to over 50 years for construction components. In United States alone, about 50 millions tons of synthetic polymers were consumed every year (Charles, 2008). Around 64% accounts for the packaging products made of polyethylene. Linear low density polyethylene is the mostly used polymer in packaging industry due to its excellent properties (Santana and Manrich, 2003, Satapathy et al., 2006, Jose et al., 2007, Ojeda et al., 2009).

Since most of the packaging product are “throwaway” items, the amount of waste plastic generated is enormous. Statistically, the amount of packaging waste accumulates at the rate of 30 millions tons/year (Shah et al., 1995). Earlier most of waste plastics were buried in the landfill. These lead to serious environment effect as most of them are not biodegradable (Singh and Sharma, 2008). At the same time, the landfilling practice is going to be banned in the near future due to public health reasons. Therefore, waste management is a urgent problem that need environmental compatibility and eco-friendly solution. According to Guillet (2010), the most effective way to deal with this litter problem is to reduce the ‘life time’ of the littered objects. The meaning of ‘life time’ is to reduce for their chain ability of the polyethylene material to make it easier to decompose.

Thus, to minimize waste plastics, conventional techniques like recycling and incineration were used. However, these techniques had serious limitation such as;

- a. Recycling only practical for scrap plastics by manufacturing while collection of plastics are contaminated with soil, food, or other chemicals, their recycling is rather

difficult. As such, only 7.1% of plastic waste is recycled in the North China in 2014 (Zhenwu et al., 2015)

- b. Incineration of plastic waste is less attractive due to high capital cost and may produce carcinogens such as dioxin. This process also consumes a lot of energy and generates greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide (Yuan et al., 2015).

A lot of effort has been focused in recent years to develop environmentally compatible plastic products that possess biodegradability characteristics. Several approaches have been considered to accelerate the biodegradation process such as:

- a. Synthetic polymer with additives

Incorporation of photosensitive (Ratanakamnuan and Ong, 2006, Harada et al., 2007) and pro-oxidant (Larissa et al., 2015, Koutny et al., 2006, Roy et al., 2007, Fontanella et al., 2010) additives induce the degradation process of polymer by photo-oxidation. Polymers incorporated with additives were classified as oxo-degradable polymers (Chiellini et al., 2006).

- b. Synthetic polymer with hydrolysable backbones

Polymers with hydrolysable backbones are fully biodegradable under suitable conditions. Examples of polymers with hydrolysable backbones are aliphatic polyesters such as polylactic acid (Drumright et al., 2000, Kumar et al., 2010), polycaprolactone (Teramoto et al., 2004, Vaskavo et al., 2008), polyhydroxybutyrate (Kim et al., 2000, Cetin, 2009, Volova et al., 2010) and so on. These polymers are

often too expensive for nonmedical use (Chen et al., 2007, Vaskova et al., 2008, Cottam et al., 2009, Sambha'a et al., 2010).

c. Synthetic polymer with carbon backbones

Polymer with carbon backbones, such as vinyl polymers is fully biodegradable (Katsura and Sasaki, 2001). However, photo-degradation is essential for biodegradation of vinyl polymers.

d. Biodegradable polymers of renewable resources

Biodegradable polymers obtained from renewable resources such as polysaccharides (Glenn and Orts, 2001, Avella et al., 2005, Senna et al., 2007), proteins and bacterial polymers have attracted significant researches.

On the other hand, bio-plastics have identified as an effort to develop environmentally compatible plastic product. Bio-plastic are plastics which derived from renewable biomass sources, such as vegetable fats and oils, starch or microbiota. For these bio-plastics, prices are most important issues since able to compete with low cost synthetic commercial polymers. In this regard, blending biodegradable polymer either natural or synthetic with commercial plastics will enlarge the range of applicability of these materials in packaging applications.

Therefore, to replace bio-plastics, starch based product are used. Starch is a biocompatible polymer. It is useful in making hybrid organic-inorganic materials, hybrid composites, starch /clay- composite and Polymer/Clay nano-composites. Reduced defects, increased surface area, percolation, interphase volume, polymer morphology are the concepts of

nanocomposites. As the size of a particle is reduced, the number of defects per particle is also reduced and mechanical properties rise proportionately (Theivasanthi and Alagar, 2011). A survey of literature indicates that not much work has been done on the jackfruit seed in blends with polymers.

Starch-based materials originally attracted a great deal of interest because of their low cost, real biodegradability, and renewable origins. Thermoplastic starch (TPS) is one of such materials obtained after disruption and plasticization of starch by heating in presence of water or other plasticizers such as glycerol (Senna et al., 2007, Song and Zheng, 2008 and Nakason et al., 2006). Thermoplastic starches have being also successfully blended with inorganic material like clay, other suitable polymers like natural rubber (Majdzadeh and Sadeghi, 2010).

In this research, jackfruit seeds flour (JSF) have been used as starch to add on the properties of degradation to the blends. The *Artocarpus heterophyllus* Lam is a species of tree of the mulberry family (Moraceae) is commonly known as jackfruit. It is native to Western Ghats of India and Malaysia. It's also produces heavier yield than any other tree and bear the largest known edible fruit (up to 35kg). The sweet yellow sheaths around the seeds are about 3-5 mm thick and have a milder and less juicy. Seeds are separated horny endocarpus enclosed by sub-gelatinous exocarpus (1mm thick) a thin whitish membrane. They are oval, oblong or oblong ellipsoid or rounded shape, light brown colour in nature, 2-3 cm (0.8-1.2 inch) in length and 1-1.5 cm (0.4-0.6 inch) in diameter (Prakash et al., 2009 and Theivasanthi and Alagar, 2011). Limited research was carried out by using JSF.

Furthermore, starch based product can accelerate the degradation process and degradability offers a complimentary strategy to deal with the litter problem. One of the simplest ways of modifying the existing polymer is to accelerate the rate of photo-degradation and thermal degradation process already taking place with using the additive such cobalt stearate. Degradability also offers a complimentary strategy to deal with this litter problem (Vaskova et al., 2008). One of the simplest ways of modifying the existing polymer is to accelerate the rate of thermal/photodegradation process already taking place by using the additive.

## **1.2 Problem Statements**

The rapid increase in production and consumption of plastics has led to the serious plastic waste problems, so called 'White Pollution', and landfill depletion, due to their high volume to weight ratio and resistance to degradation. Accumulated plastic film residues in soil have caused significant decrease in yield. Plastic wastes floating on rivers and lakes are increasingly threatening fishery, navigation, operation of hydropower plants, irrigation and other public works. Moreover, as over 99% of plastics are of fossil fuel origin, their rapid increase will put further pressure on the already limited non-renewable resources on earth (Zhigui et al., 2015).

Solid waste disposal and litter like polyethylene among the many problems that arise from whereby the litter is related with human inventor. The present generation commodity plastics, especially the packaging materials, contribute significantly to resolve the solid waste disposal problem. The use of plastic materials that can re-enter the biological life cycle, appear to be one of the most promising solution to this problem after the first photodegradation process is