

Alternative Energy

Edited by

A.K.M. Mohiuddin

Asif Hoda



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Chapter 18

A solar heat-pump system for air-conditioning, water heating and drying

M N A Hawlader, K A Jahangeer*, Ye Shaochun* and Choy Tack Hoon*

Department of Mechanical Engineering, International Islamic University Malaysia

*Department of Mechanical Engineering, National University of Singapore

ABSTRACT

In this study, the performance of a three-in-one solar system is investigated. The three applications of the system are: air-conditioning, water heating and drying, which can be served simultaneously or independently. The presence of evaporator-collector enables the system to operate round the clock. Parallel arrangement of the evaporator and evaporator-collector is made to improve the system performance. A large fraction of the energy requirements is met by a combination of energy collected from sun, ambient and the energy recovered from a vapour compression heat-pump system, which also serves as an air-conditioner. The system shows good potential for implementation in commercial and residential applications and would give a new dimension in the process of replacement of conventional energy with renewable energy sources.

Keywords: heat-pump, air-conditioning, water heating, drying, coefficient of performance

INTRODUCTION

In view of the growing global energy needs and concern for environmental degradation, the possibility of running thermal system using the energy from the sun is receiving considerable attention in recent years [1, 2]. There are two reasons for this concern: the first, increasing demand for energy as the world population steadily increases [3], and secondly, the environmental pollution due to burning of fossil fuels. An integrated solar thermal system offers considerable potential for savings due to larger energy efficiency. A proto-type of the system has been fabricated and installed at the National University of Singapore. This paper includes the results of experiments and analyses of the solar heat pump system for air-conditioning, water heating and drying. One promising feature of this system is that these three functions can be served simultaneously or independently.

EXPERIMENTAL SET-UP

The Solar heat pump system for air-conditioning, water heating and drying has been designed and built, as shown in Fig.1. The various components of the system are: evaporator-collector, evaporator, variable speed reciprocating compressor, air-cooled and water-cooled condensers, drying chamber, blower and other control devices. The evaporator-collector is made of a copper absorber plate coated with black paint. Underneath the absorber plate, serpentine copper tubes of 9 mm diameter are brazed