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A Reserach Study on Self-Charging in Electric Vehicles Using Wheels

Prof. S. M. Bhole[1], Gaurav Choudhari[2], Ganesh Chate[3], Shejal Bavaskar[4], Kishor Hadpe[5], Ritesh Chopade[6]
[1]Assistant Professor, Department of Mechanical Engineering
[2,3,4,5,6]Students of Department of Mechanical Engineering
Padm. Dr. V. B. Kolte College of Engineering, Malkapur, Maharashtra

Abstract: *The rapid adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) has intensified research into improving energy efficiency and extending driving range. One emerging area of interest is self-charging mechanisms utilizing wheel-based energy recovery systems. These systems aim to harvest mechanical energy generated during wheel rotation, braking, and vehicle motion, and convert it into electrical energy to support auxiliary loads or partially recharge the onboard battery. This review presents a comprehensive analysis of wheel-based self-charging techniques, including regenerative braking, wheel-mounted generators, hub motor reverse energy flow, and vibration-based energy harvesting methods. The working principles, energy conversion efficiency, and practical feasibility of each approach are critically examined based on existing research. Furthermore, the paper highlights the limitations of current systems such as increased rolling resistance, limited power output, and integration challenges. Key research gaps related to system optimization, real-world validation, and hybrid energy recovery architectures are identified. The review concludes that while wheel-based self-charging systems cannot independently sustain vehicle propulsion, they offer significant potential for enhancing overall energy efficiency and enabling self-powered auxiliary subsystems in future electric vehicles.*

Keywords: Electric vehicles, self-charging systems, wheel-based energy recovery, regenerative braking, energy rvesting, hub motor technology, auxiliary power generation, vehicle energy efficiency, and sustainable transportation

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of electric vehicles (EVs) has positioned them as a viable solution for sustainable transportation; however, challenges related to limited driving range, energy efficiency, and auxiliary power consumption continue to hinder their optimal performance. While significant progress has been made in battery technology and charging infrastructure, a considerable portion of mechanical energy generated during vehicle operation—particularly through wheel rotation, suspension dynamics, and braking—is still dissipated in the form of heat and vibration. This underutilization of available energy presents a critical opportunity for improving overall system efficiency through innovative energy recovery mechanisms.

Existing energy recovery techniques, most notably regenerative braking, have demonstrated the ability to convert a portion of kinetic energy into electrical energy during deceleration. However, such systems are inherently intermittent and fail to capture energy during steady-state driving conditions. Recent research efforts have explored wheel-based self-charging approaches, including electromagnetic generators integrated with wheel hubs, suspension-based energy harvesting systems, and vibration-driven mechanisms. Despite their potential, these approaches are often limited by low power output, increased mechanical resistance, lack of adaptive control, and insufficient real-world validation, restricting their effectiveness to auxiliary applications rather than meaningful contributions to overall energy management.

Furthermore, current studies largely focus on isolated energy harvesting techniques without considering an integrated and optimized framework that balances energy generation with system losses. The absence of coordinated control strategies and standardized evaluation metrics further complicates the assessment of net energy benefits. As a result, there remains a significant gap in developing a practical, efficient, and scalable wheel-based energy recovery system that can operate continuously under varying driving conditions without degrading vehicle performance.

To address these challenges, this research proposes an optimized wheel-based self-charging framework that integrates energy harvesting mechanisms with intelligent control strategies to maximize net energy gain while minimizing mechanical losses. The study focuses on analyzing the interaction between mechanical energy sources at the wheel level and electrical energy conversion systems, followed by the development of a model capable of operating under real-world conditions. The primary objective is not to replace conventional charging methods, but to enhance overall vehicle efficiency by reducing auxiliary load dependency on the main battery and improving energy utilization.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Electric vehicles (EVs) have emerged as a promising solution for sustainable transportation; however, their performance is still constrained by limitations in energy efficiency and optimal utilization of available energy resources. During normal vehicle operation, a substantial amount of mechanical energy is continuously lost in the form of heat and vibrations generated through wheel rotation, suspension dynamics, and tire–road interaction. Although regenerative braking systems are widely implemented to recover kinetic energy during deceleration, their functionality is inherently limited to braking events, leaving a significant portion of energy during steady-state driving conditions unutilized.

In recent years, various wheel-based energy harvesting approaches, including hub-mounted generators, electromagnetic suspension systems, and vibration-based mechanisms, have been proposed to capture this otherwise wasted energy. However, these systems face several critical challenges that restrict their practical applicability. The amount of electrical energy generated is often minimal compared to the energy demand of the vehicle, while the introduction of additional mechanical components leads to increased rolling resistance, frictional losses, and system complexity. In many cases, the energy consumed due to added resistance offsets the harvested energy, resulting in inefficient or negative net energy gain. Moreover, existing research primarily focuses on isolated energy harvesting techniques without developing a comprehensive and integrated system capable of operating efficiently under real-world driving conditions. The lack of adaptive control strategies further limits system performance, as most designs do not account for variations in vehicle speed, road conditions, and load dynamics. Additionally, there is a significant lack of experimental validation and standardized evaluation frameworks, making it difficult to compare different approaches and assess their long-term feasibility, durability, and economic viability.

These limitations highlight a critical need for the development of an optimized and integrated wheel-based energy recovery system that can effectively harness available mechanical energy while minimizing associated losses. Such a system must ensure a positive net energy balance, incorporate intelligent control mechanisms, and maintain overall vehicle performance without introducing significant mechanical or economic drawbacks.

III. EXISTING SYSTEM ANALYSIS

Existing energy recovery systems in electric vehicles primarily focus on capturing mechanical energy generated during vehicle operation, with regenerative braking being the most widely adopted and commercially successful approach. In regenerative braking systems, the electric motor operates as a generator during deceleration, converting kinetic energy into electrical energy that is stored in the battery. While this method significantly improves energy efficiency, its operation is limited to braking events, resulting in missed opportunities for energy recovery during continuous driving conditions.

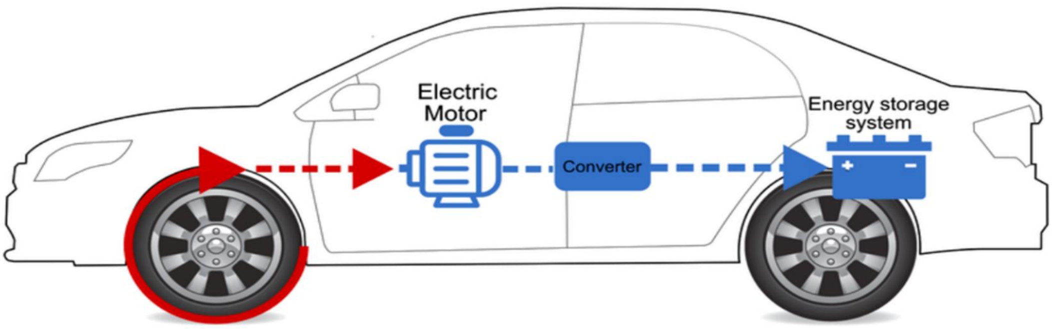
To overcome this limitation, various wheel-based energy harvesting techniques have been proposed. One such approach involves the use of wheel-mounted or hub-integrated generators that produce electrical energy during wheel rotation. Although these systems enable continuous energy generation, they introduce additional mechanical resistance, which can negatively impact vehicle performance. Studies indicate that the energy required to overcome this added resistance may offset the generated power, thereby reducing overall system efficiency if not properly optimized. Another approach involves suspension-based energy harvesting systems, where electromagnetic or piezoelectric mechanisms are integrated within the vehicle suspension to capture energy from vibrations and road-induced movements. These systems are advantageous in that they utilize otherwise wasted vibrational energy without directly interfering with the drivetrain. However, the amount of energy harvested is typically low and highly dependent on road conditions, vehicle speed, and suspension characteristics, making their performance inconsistent under real-world scenarios.

In-wheel motor systems also contribute to energy recovery by enabling bidirectional energy flow, allowing the motor to function as a generator under certain operating conditions. While this eliminates the need for additional mechanical components, it requires complex control strategies and advanced power electronics to ensure efficient energy conversion and system stability. Furthermore, the effectiveness of such systems is still largely dependent on driving patterns and operating conditions.

Overall, existing systems demonstrate that wheel-based energy recovery is technically feasible but constrained by several challenges, including low power output, increased mechanical losses, system complexity, and lack of integrated operation. Most approaches function independently rather than as part of a coordinated system, limiting their ability to achieve a meaningful net energy gain. These limitations highlight the need for an optimized and integrated solution that balances energy harvesting with vehicle efficiency.

IV. SYSTEM DESIGN

The proposed system is based on a hybrid wheel-based energy recovery mechanism designed to capture mechanical energy from both wheel rotation and suspension dynamics during vehicle operation. The system integrates multiple energy harvesting sources to ensure continuous power generation under varying driving conditions. Unlike conventional systems that operate independently, this design focuses on coordinated energy capture and utilization to maintain a positive net energy balance. The harvested energy is not intended for propulsion but for supporting auxiliary loads, thereby improving overall vehicle efficiency. The system emphasizes minimal interference with vehicle performance while ensuring practical feasibility.



The wheel rotation energy harvesting unit consists of a low-resistance electromagnetic generator coupled with the wheel hub. As the wheel rotates, mechanical motion is converted into electrical energy through electromagnetic induction. The design ensures that the generator introduces minimal additional torque, thereby reducing rolling resistance and avoiding efficiency losses. The generated power is continuous but relatively low, making it suitable for auxiliary applications. Proper mechanical coupling and alignment are critical to ensure smooth operation and durability under real-world driving conditions. In addition to rotational energy, the system incorporates a suspension-based energy harvesting mechanism that captures energy from vertical vibrations caused by road irregularities. This unit utilizes an electromagnetic coil–magnet arrangement integrated within the shock absorber. As the suspension moves, relative motion between the coil and magnet induces electrical energy. This approach allows energy harvesting without directly affecting the drivetrain. However, the generated power depends on road conditions and vehicle speed, requiring efficient integration to ensure consistent performance.

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The electrical output from both harvesting units is conditioned using a power processing circuit that includes rectification, filtering, and voltage regulation. Since the generated energy is typically in alternating form with varying amplitude, it must be converted into stable direct current suitable for storage and utilization. The conditioning circuit ensures efficient energy transfer while minimizing conversion losses. Proper design of this stage is essential to maintain system reliability and protect downstream components.

The conditioned energy is stored in an intermediate energy storage system, such as a supercapacitor or auxiliary battery, which acts as a buffer between generation and utilization. This storage unit allows intermittent and low-level energy to be accumulated and supplied when required. It also stabilizes power delivery to connected loads, ensuring consistent operation of auxiliary systems. The choice of storage device depends on response time, efficiency, and lifecycle considerations.

An intelligent control unit is incorporated to manage the overall operation of the system by monitoring parameters such as vehicle speed, vibration levels, and load requirements. The controller dynamically regulates when and how energy is harvested to avoid unnecessary mechanical resistance and ensure optimal performance. By implementing adaptive control strategies, the system can respond to real-time driving conditions and maximize usable energy output. This improves efficiency compared to static energy harvesting approaches.

Finally, the harvested and stored energy is distributed to auxiliary vehicle systems such as sensors, lighting, and electronic control units. By supplying power to these subsystems, the proposed design reduces dependency on the main traction battery, thereby contributing to improved energy utilization. The overall system is designed to be modular, scalable, and compatible with existing EV architectures, making it a practical solution for enhancing efficiency without significant structural modifications.

V. LIMITATIONS

Although the proposed hybrid wheel-based energy recovery system enhances energy utilization, it is inherently limited by the relatively low magnitude of power that can be harvested from wheel rotation and suspension vibrations. The energy available from these sources is distributed and intermittent, resulting in output that is suitable primarily for auxiliary applications rather than traction purposes. Even with optimized design, the system cannot replace conventional charging methods or significantly extend driving range. This limitation is fundamental to the physics of energy availability within vehicle dynamics. Therefore, the system must be positioned as a supplementary efficiency improvement rather than a primary energy source.

Another important limitation is the introduction of additional mechanical components, particularly in the wheel-mounted generator, which can contribute to increased rolling resistance and minor efficiency losses. Although the design focuses on minimizing friction and torque impact, complete elimination of mechanical losses is not feasible. If not carefully optimized, the energy required to overcome this added resistance may offset the harvested energy, reducing net system benefit. Achieving an effective balance between energy generation and mechanical efficiency remains a critical design challenge.

The performance of the suspension-based energy harvesting unit is highly dependent on external factors such as road conditions, vehicle speed, and load variations. On smooth roads or at constant speeds, vibration levels are significantly reduced, leading to lower energy generation. This variability results in inconsistent power output, making it difficult to rely on the system for stable energy supply without proper storage and control mechanisms. Consequently, system performance may vary significantly across different operating environments.

The integration of multiple energy harvesting subsystems increases overall system complexity, particularly in terms of control, synchronization, and power management. The requirement for an intelligent control unit to dynamically regulate energy harvesting introduces additional design and implementation challenges. Ensuring reliable communication between mechanical and electrical components, while maintaining system stability under varying conditions, can be difficult and may increase the risk of system failure if not properly engineered.

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Durability and long-term reliability also present notable limitations, as the system components are continuously exposed to mechanical stress, vibrations, temperature variations, and environmental factors such as dust and moisture. Components such as coils, magnets, and mechanical couplings may experience wear and degradation over time, potentially affecting system performance. The lack of extensive long-term testing data further adds uncertainty regarding maintenance requirements and lifecycle costs.

Finally, economic feasibility remains a constraint for large-scale implementation of the proposed system. The addition of energy harvesting components, control systems, and storage units increases the overall cost and complexity of the vehicle. Given that the energy gains are relatively modest, justifying the cost-benefit ratio becomes challenging. Without significant advancements in low-cost materials and efficient design, widespread commercial adoption may be limited.

VI. RESULT

The hybrid wheel-based energy recovery system is expected to demonstrate a measurable improvement in overall energy utilization within the electric vehicle. By capturing energy from both wheel rotation and suspension vibrations, the system is anticipated to generate continuous low-level electrical power during vehicle operation. Although the generated power is not sufficient for propulsion, it is expected to effectively support auxiliary loads such as sensors, lighting systems, and electronic control units. This redistribution of power demand is likely to reduce the load on the main battery, thereby contributing to improved overall efficiency.

The integration of multiple energy harvesting sources is expected to result in more consistent energy generation compared to standalone systems. While individual sources such as suspension vibrations may produce intermittent outputs, their combination with wheel rotation-based generation is anticipated to provide a more stable and continuous energy supply. The use of an energy storage unit, such as a supercapacitor, is expected to further smooth fluctuations and ensure reliable power delivery to auxiliary systems under varying driving conditions.

The implementation of an intelligent control unit is expected to optimize system performance by dynamically regulating energy harvesting based on real-time parameters such as vehicle speed, road conditions, and load requirements. This adaptive approach is anticipated to minimize unnecessary mechanical resistance and maximize net energy gain. As a result, the system is expected to perform more efficiently than conventional static energy harvesting approaches, particularly in diverse and unpredictable driving environments.

From a performance perspective, the proposed system is expected to achieve a positive net energy balance under practical operating conditions when properly optimized. Basic analytical estimations suggest that careful design of generator torque and system efficiency can ensure that the harvested energy exceeds the losses introduced by additional components. This outcome is critical in validating the feasibility of the system as a beneficial energy recovery solution rather than an additional energy burden.

In terms of durability and operational behavior, the system is expected to maintain stable performance over extended usage when designed with appropriate materials and protective mechanisms. While long-term wear cannot be completely eliminated, the use of robust components and optimized mechanical integration is anticipated to reduce degradation effects. Additionally, the system is expected to operate without significantly affecting vehicle dynamics, ensuring that ride comfort and safety are not compromised.

Overall, the expected results indicate that the proposed system can serve as an effective supplementary energy solution, improving energy efficiency and reducing auxiliary battery dependency without introducing substantial performance drawbacks. These outcomes support the potential of wheel-based energy recovery as a practical and scalable approach for enhancing the sustainability of electric vehicles.

VII. CONCLUSION

This research presents a systematic approach to improving energy utilization in electric vehicles through a hybrid wheel-based energy recovery system. By integrating energy harvesting from wheel rotation and suspension dynamics, the proposed design effectively captures a portion of the mechanical energy that is otherwise lost during normal vehicle operation. The inclusion of an intelligent control mechanism further enhances system performance by optimizing energy capture while minimizing additional mechanical losses, thereby ensuring a positive net energy balance.

Although the system does not aim to replace conventional charging methods or directly support propulsion, it demonstrates significant potential in powering auxiliary systems and reducing dependency on the main battery. This contributes to improved overall efficiency and supports the development of more sustainable electric vehicle architectures. The study also highlights the importance of system optimization, integration, and real-world adaptability in achieving consistent performance under varying operating conditions.

In conclusion, the proposed wheel-based self-charging framework offers a practical and scalable solution for enhancing energy efficiency in electric vehicles. Future advancements focusing on lightweight design, cost optimization, and adaptive control strategies are expected to further strengthen its applicability and support its integration into next-generation electric mobility systems.

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