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STRUCTURAL AND DIELECTRIC STUDY OF NANO-CRYSTALLINE $MFe_{12}O_{19}$ (M=Ba and Sr) HEXAFERRITES PREPARED VIA SOL-GEL AUTO-COMBUSTION TECHNIQUES

¹Musa, I. M., ²Abdu, Y.* and ²Musa A. O.

¹Department of Physics, Federal University Dutse, Jigawa State. Nigeria.

²Department of Physics, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria.

*Co-author email: ayunusa.phy@buk.edu.ng, yunusa_abdu@yahoo.com

Phone No: 08029174511

ABSTRACT

The structural and electrical properties of m-type hexaferrites are very sensitive to particle size, shape and degree of crystallinity. The syntheses techniques and the nature of cations in the material lead to significant change in electromagnetic properties of the materials. In this work, M-type $BaFe_{12}O_{19}$ and $SrFe_{12}O_{19}$ nano-hexaferrites were successfully synthesized via sol-gel auto-combustion techniques. The structural, dielectric and functional group of these nanoparticles was investigated using XRD, FTIR, and Impedance analyzer. The XRD analysis revealed that pure and single phase hexagonal ferrites with crystallites sizes of 33.35nm for $BaFe_{12}O_{19}$ and 32.29nm for $SrFe_{12}O_{19}$ were obtained. The lattice constant slightly varies due to variation of ionic radii in the samples. The FTIR spectra of the sample show three dominant peaks in the range 400-600 cm^{-1} which indicate the formation of the desired hexaferrites structure. The dielectric properties were studied using impedance measurements obtained in the frequency range 100Hz-120MHz. The dielectric constant, dielectric loss and conductivity were analysed using Maxwell-Wagner model. Dielectric constant was enhanced at high frequency in the entire sample and reduction of dielectric loss is also observed with further ions substitutions. The grain boundary resistance contributes the most to the dielectric properties as indicated by Nyquist plot, whereas the AC conductivity is the dominant conducting mechanism in the material. A high dielectric property, low energy dissipation and higher conductivity were observed with $SrFe_{12}O_{19}$ at higher frequency these make it useful for higher frequency applications.

Keywords: M-type nano-hexaferrites, sol-gel auto-combustion, metal ions substitutions, materials properties.

INTRODUCTION

M-type hexaferrites with SrM ($SrFe_{12}O_{19}$) and BaM ($BaFe_{12}O_{19}$) structure are ferromagnetic material with magnetization along c-axis (Mohammed *et al.*, 2020). They also possess high resonance frequencies, high resistivity, high saturation magnetization (M_s), high magneto-crystalline anisotropies, Curie temperature (T_c), coercivity (H_c) along with low cost, excellent chemical stability and corrosion resistance low eddy current losses as well as smaller dielectric losses with thermal stability (Maria *et al.*, 2018, Mukhtar *et al.*, 2021, Imran *et al.*, 2011). This makes M-type hexaferrite a viable candidate for various technological applications such as permanent magnets, magnetic recording media, magneto-optical devices, microwave devices, etc (Ashraff *et al.*, 2021, Mohammed *et al.*,

2021, Tchouank *et al.*, 2019). The electrical properties of ferrites play vital role in high frequency applications and these are also associated to the dielectrics, the benefits of the ferrites over other dielectrics are their elastic properties, better resistance to environmental alterations, mainly at higher temperature (Shah *et al.*, 2020). The major factors affecting M-type hexagonal ferrites properties are associated to fabrication techniques and cations distributions (Abdu and Musa, 2021). Several techniques have been employed by various researchers to synthesize M-type hexaferrites. The most extensively used techniques for the bulk preparation of ferrites are the conventional solid-state reactions such as ceramic method, high energy ball milling and flash combustion.

These methods involve milling and firing of the reaction mixture at about 1200°C or above and thus result in the incorporation of impurities, generation of lattice strain and irregularity in particle shape. Moreover, at high temperature, their particle size tends to be larger due to agglomeration of fine particles (Ashiq *et. al.*, 2017, Mukhtar *et. al.*, 2012, Almesseire *et. al.*, 2019). On the other hand, wet methods do not involve any milling of the starting materials and there is direct mixing of cations on atomic scale. Evolution of gaseous products during exothermic decomposition of the precursor provides heat to the solid-state reaction, thus decreasing the external temperature required, these methods lead to the formation of stoichiometrically pure and single-phase nanosized ferrites with large surface area in shorter time (Abdu and Musa, 2021, Altaf *et. al.*, 2015). Co-precipitation is one of the simplest techniques for the preparation of fine hexaferrite particles. However, such particles strongly agglomerate, so that an additional milling procedure seems to be necessary. A versatile method for preparing submicron particles at low temperature is the sol-gel technique. In addition, recently this method has been found to be a very suitable method for the preparation of multi-component oxide materials at relatively lower temperatures. The major advantages of the method are not only to reduce the product formation temperature but also have good control over its homogeneity, microstructures and decrease in the particle size which results to a high coercivity values that are applicable in high frequency applications (Kajal *et. al.*, 2007, Ibrahim *et. al.*, 2021).

This work presents the synthesis and characterization of pure M-type hexaferrite prepared using sol-gel auto combustion techniques. The work aims to synthesizes pure phase M-type hexaferrites and study the dielectric properties of synthesized M-type hexaferrite. The prepared samples were characterized using XRD, FTIR, and impedance analyzer.

MATERIALS AND SYNTHESIS

Pure M-type hexaferrites with SrM ($\text{SrFe}_{12}\text{O}_{19}$) and BaM ($\text{BaFe}_{12}\text{O}_{19}$) structure were synthesized via sol-gel autocombustion technique. The starting materials were obtained from Loba Chemie with 99.9% purity which include $\text{Fe}(\text{NO}_3)_3 \cdot 9\text{H}_2\text{O}$, $\text{Ba}(\text{NO}_3)_2$, $\text{Sr}(\text{NO}_3)_2$ and citric acid ($\text{C}_6\text{H}_8\text{O}_7$). The required amounts of the metal salt were weighed in stoichiometric ratios and dissolved in ethylene glycol to form the salt

solution, maintaining the molar ratio of citric acid to metal nitrates at 1:1.5. To adjust the pH to 7.00, ammonia solution was added dropwise. The solution was then heated with a magnetic heating stirrer at 80-100 °C for 3 hours which evaporated the ethylene glycol and obtained the viscous gel solution. The solution was then heated at 280-300 °C for about 30 minutes which resulted in autocombustion thereby turning the gel into fluffy precursor powder. This process was accompanied by emission of volatile gases of H₂CO, NH₃, and N₂. The precursor materials were calcinated at 1100 °C for 6 hours to obtain the desired hexagonal phase.

Sample Characterization

The characterization of the synthesized samples was done using X-ray Diffraction Machine (XRD), Impedance analyser, Field emission Scanning Electron Microscopy (FESEM), Energy Dispersive X-ray Spectroscopy

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The structural, functional group and impedance analysis was carried out, presented and discussed. The discussion is based on the XRD, Fourier transform (FTIR) and Impedance analyzer spectra obtained for the synthesized hexaferrite samples. Other computations carried out on the samples have also been presented and discussed.

XRD Analysis

The x-ray diffractometer (XRD) (Bruker AXSD8 advance diffractometer) was used to study the structure of the synthesized M-type hexaferrites. XRD patterns were recorded between 20°–80° range.

The XRD spectra of $\text{BaFe}_{12}\text{O}_{19}$ and $\text{SrFe}_{12}\text{O}_{19}$ are shown in Fig. 1. The diffraction peaks were indexed using JCPDS card no. 39–1433. The XRD peaks show the occurrence of pure M-type magnetoplumbite hexagonal structure without impurities. The values of the lattice parameters were calculated and presented in Table 1. There is slight variation in values of the lattice parameters of $\text{BaFe}_{12}\text{O}_{19}$ and $\text{SrFe}_{12}\text{O}_{19}$ this arises as a result of variation in ionic radii of Ba^{2+} (1.35 Å) and Sr^{2+} (1.12 Å). The c/a ratio of all the samples is not greater than 3.98 as shown in table 1, this implies that all the samples exhibits hexagonal structure, due to the fact that hexaferrite materials can be regarded as having hexagonal structure when c/a ratio of the material is not greater than 3.98 (Ibrahim *et. al.*, 2021). The values of the crystallites size obtained are 33.35nm for $\text{BaFe}_{12}\text{O}_{19}$ and 32.29nm for $\text{SrFe}_{12}\text{O}_{19}$, as

presented in Table 2. The crystallite size varies due to variation of ionic radii with Ba^{2+} (1.35 Å) and Sr^{2+} (1.12 Å). The strain (η) observed in the sample occurred during synthesis and calcination processes. The variation of the strain (η) may be

attributed to improvement towards pure hexagonal structure (Abdu and Musa, 2021, Ibrahim *et. al.*, 2021).

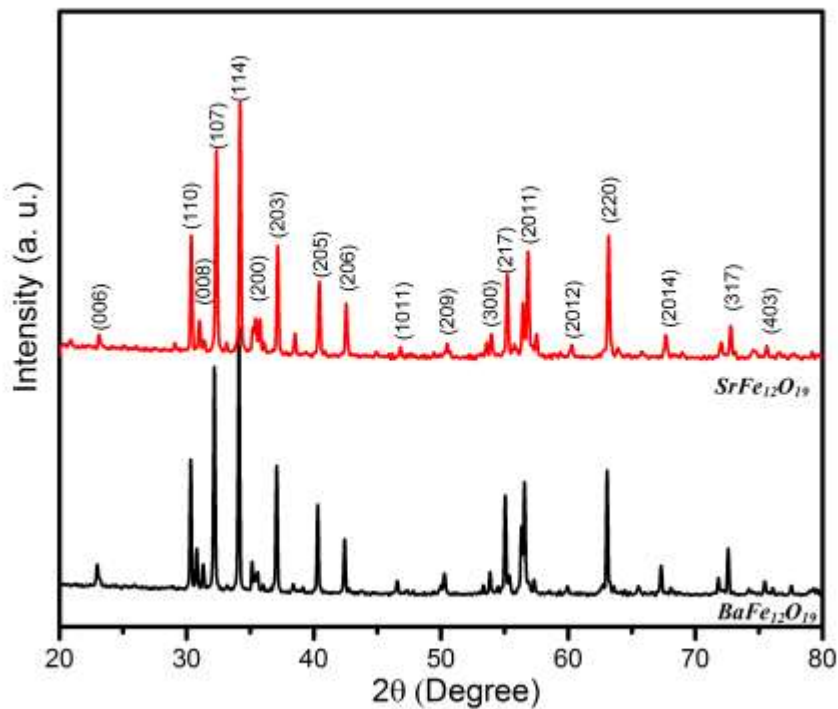


Figure 1 XRD spectra of $BaFe_{12}O_{19}$ and $SrFe_{12}O_{19}$

Table 1. Calculated Structural parameters from XRD result

Sample	2θ (Degree)	d (Å)	β (Degree)	a (Å)	c (Å)	V (Å ³)	c/a	D (Å)	η	ϵ
$BaFe_{12}O_{19}$	30.285	2.94	0.244	5.89	23.28	701.72	3.94	333.540	-	0.0005
		9		8	0	8	7		0.00376	7
$SrFe_{12}O_{19}$	30.243	2.95	0.252	5.90	23.25	702.69	3.93	322.920	-	0.0005
		3		6	0	5	7		0.00389	9

FTIR Analysis

Fourier transform infrared (FTIR) spectrometer (Nicolet FTIR interferometer IR prestige-21(model-8400S)) was used to study the nature of the attached functional groups of the material. The room temperature FTIR spectra were recorded in the wavenumber range 4000 cm^{-1} and 400 cm^{-1} .

The FTIR spectra $BaFe_{12}O_{19}$ and $SrFe_{12}O_{19}$ is shown in Figure 2. The characteristics bands were observed on each spectrum between 400-600 cm^{-1} range, specifically at 578 cm^{-1} , 543 cm^{-1} and 421 cm^{-1} . These prominent peaks correspond to a symmetric stretching and out plane vibrations of metal oxide (Fe-O) in octahedral

and tetrahedral sites and give an idea of the formation of hexaferrites (Abdu and Musa, 2021, Ibrahim *et. al.*, 2021). The observed peak at 898 cm^{-1} is related to O-Fe-O vibration mode. The small band around 1462 cm^{-1} reveals the vibration of metal oxygen metal (M-O-M) bond, which is represented by iron-oxygen-iron. The less intense fascinating bands around 2061 cm^{-1} and 2360 cm^{-1} could be assigned to the O-C-O stretching bands. The peak at 3405 cm^{-1} corresponds to the vibration of the hydroxyl group in the sample which is attributed to bending mode of H-O-H.

Dielectric and Impedance Spectroscopy

The room temperature impedance spectra was recorded with impedance analyzer (Wayne Kerr 6500B) having 0 to +40V DC bias voltage and 0 to 100mA DC bias Current in 100Hz to 120MHz frequency range. This was used to calculate the

dielectric parameters such as dielectric constant, dielectric loss and AC conductivity. However, prior to the impedance measurement, 9mm thickness pellets were prepared and coated with silver conducting paint to make them suitable for use in the measuring instrument.

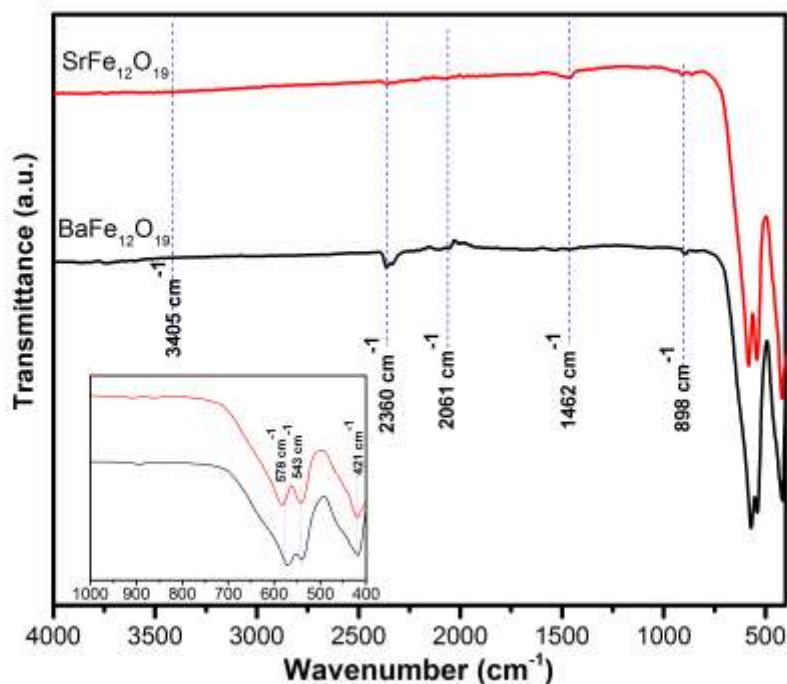


Figure 2 FTIR spectra of $BaFe_{12}O_{19}$ and $SrFe_{12}O_{19}$

Fig. 3a and 3b shows the variation of ϵ' (dielectric constant) and ϵ'' (dielectric loss factor) as a function of frequency for $BaFe_{12}O_{19}$ and $SrFe_{12}O_{19}$. It was observed that the ϵ' (dielectric constant) and ϵ'' (dielectric loss) decreases sharply with the rise in frequency at lower frequency up to intermediate frequency, and slightly rises at higher frequency in $SrFe_{12}O_{19}$. However, $BaFe_{12}O_{19}$ show the same behavior with lower and intermediate frequency, whereas in higher frequency region it becomes almost independent of frequency. The high value observed at lower frequencies could be attributed to the presence of oxygen vacancies, interfacial dislocation, grain boundary defects, and the occurrence of large number of electrons hopping between Fe^{3+} and Fe^{2+} (Abdu and Musa, 2021, Mohammed *et. al.*, 2021). Moreover, the slight increase in ϵ' at higher frequencies, will reduces the penetration depth of EM waves by

increasing the skin effect (Mohammed *et. al.*, 2021, Ibrahim *et. al.*, 2021). It can also be observed that $SrFe_{12}O_{19}$ has higher dielectric properties compared $BaFe_{12}O_{19}$.

Figure 4 present the variation of dielectric loss factor/ $\tan \delta$ as a function of frequency for $BaFe_{12}O_{19}$ and $SrFe_{12}O_{19}$. Similar to the trend observed for ϵ' with frequency, the $\tan \delta$ values decreases with the increase in frequency at lower and intermediate frequency, and increases at higher frequencies. These variations seen with $\tan \delta$ against the frequency can be ascribed to the phenomenon of conduction in ferrites, similar to the Koop's phenomenological theory [6-7]. Lagging of polarization behind ac field dielectric loss arises and may be initiated by the impurities present, grain boundaries and crystal lattice imperfections [13].

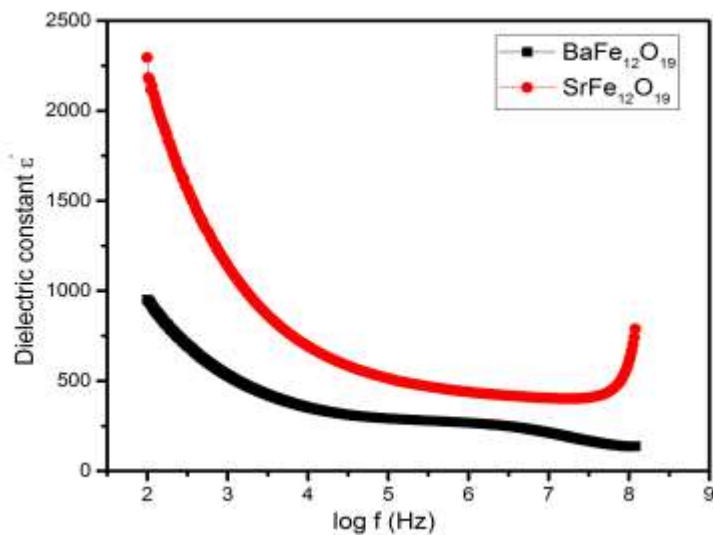


Fig. 3a shows the variation of ϵ' as a function of frequency for $BaFe_{12}O_{19}$ and $SrFe_{12}O_{19}$

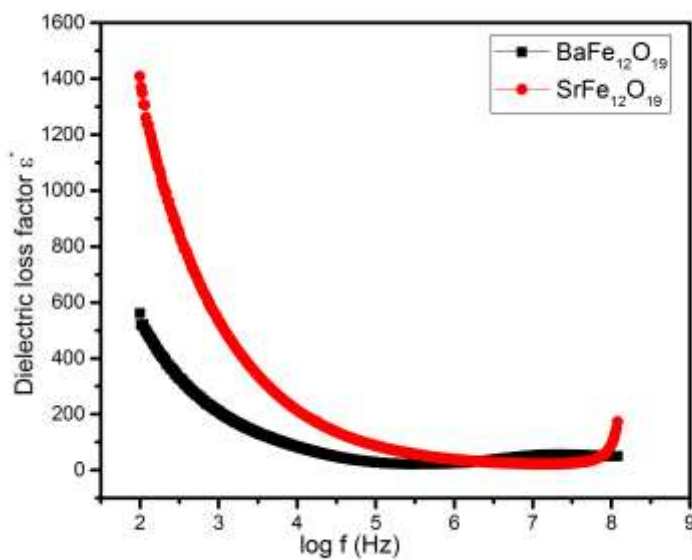


Fig. 3b shows the variation of ϵ'' as a function of frequency for $BaFe_{12}O_{19}$ and $SrFe_{12}O_{19}$

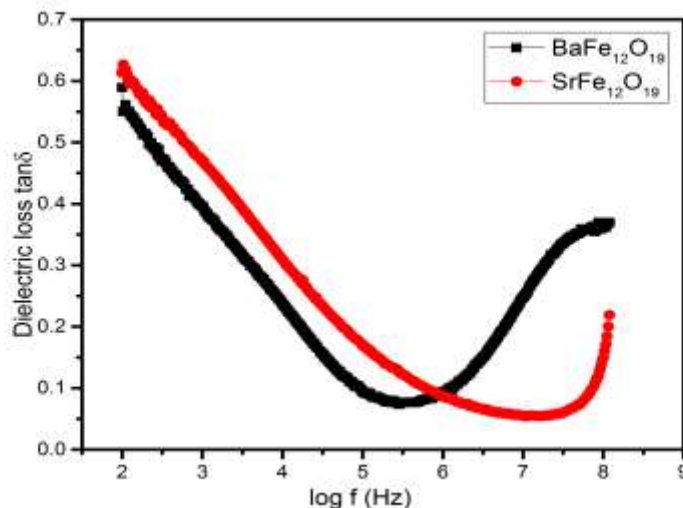


Figure 4 the variation of $\tan \delta$ as a function of frequency for $BaFe_{12}O_{19}$ and $SrFe_{12}O_{19}$.

It was reported from various researchers that; a polycrystalline hexagonal ferrite sample is consist of grains (or parallel conducting plates) separated by grain boundaries (or resistive plates) (Mohammed *et. al.*, 2019, Ibrahim *et. al.*, 2021). These resistances contribute the dielectric and conducting behavior of the ferrite’s material. In order to understand the nature and contributions of the grain and grain boundary resistance of the synthesized samples a Nyquist/cole-cole plots was used. This is a plot of the imaginary part (Z'') versus real part (Z') of complex impedance (Z^*) which consists of a semi-circle arc starting from the lower frequencies side to the higher frequencies side.

The part of the semi-circle at the lower frequency side represents contribution of the grain boundaries (or grain boundary resistance (R_{gb}) while the part of the semi-circle at the higher frequency side of the Cole-Cole plot represents contribution from the grains (or grain resistance (R_g)) (Abdu and Musa, 2021). Figure 5 presents the Cole-Cole plot of $BaFe_{12}O_{19}$ and $SrFe_{12}O_{19}$. It was observed that there is no higher frequency arc for all the substituted samples. Hence, we can conclude that there is no or less contribution from R_g towards the dielectric properties for these samples.

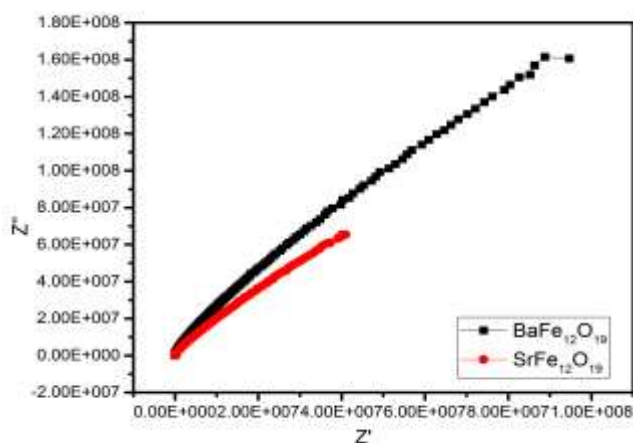


Figure 5: The Cole-Cole plot of $BaFe_{12}O_{19}$ and $SrFe_{12}O_{19}$

Figure 6 show the change of ac conductivity with frequency of $BaFe_{12}O_{19}$ and $SrFe_{12}O_{19}$ hexaferrite. It was observed from figure 6 that, the AC conductivity exhibits frequency independent behavior from lower to

intermediate frequencies, but a sudden and abrupt rise in σ_{ac} of the prepared samples was observed in all the samples at higher frequency. This behavior is attributed to the fact that, at lower frequencies grain boundaries are more

vigorous; therefore, the hopping frequency of electron among ferric (Fe^{3+}) and ferrous (Fe^{2+}) ion is small at lower frequencies (Mohammed *et al.*, 2021, Ibrahim *et al.*, 2021,). The conductive grains turn out to be more active as the frequency of applied field increases, thereby encouraging carriers hopping among two

neighboring octahedral sites and a conversion between ferrous (Fe^{2+}) and ferric (Fe^{3+}) ions (Mohammed *et al.*, 2019, Ibrahim *et al.*, 2021, Abdu and Musa, 2021). Thus, conductivity linearly rises with frequency. Moreover, dispersion at high frequency is due to the conductivity of grains.

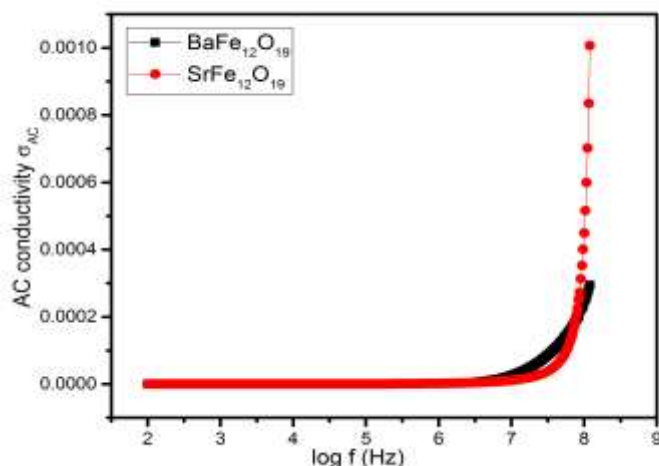


Fig. 6 the variation of ac conductivity with frequency of $\text{BaFe}_{12}\text{O}_{19}$ and $\text{SrFe}_{12}\text{O}_{19}$

The variation of $\ln\sigma_{ac}$ with $\ln\omega$ for $\text{BaFe}_{12}\text{O}_{19}$ and $\text{SrFe}_{12}\text{O}_{19}$ is presented in fig. 7. A linear relationship was observed between $\ln\sigma_{ac}$ and $\ln\omega$ with $\ln\sigma_{ac}$ increasing steadily with increase in $\ln\omega$, the slope of this linear graph gives the value of the exponent "s" in eqn. (1.0). It has been reported that the value of "s" usually lies between 0 and 1 and that when $s = 0$, the

conduction mechanism is independent of frequency (i. e. DC conductivity) whereas it is dependent on frequency (i. e. AC conductivity) when $s \leq 1$ [13]. The slope of the linear plot of our sample (Fig. 7) was found to be approximately 1.0 for both the samples. Hence, we can conclude AC conductivity to be the dominant conduction mechanism in the samples.

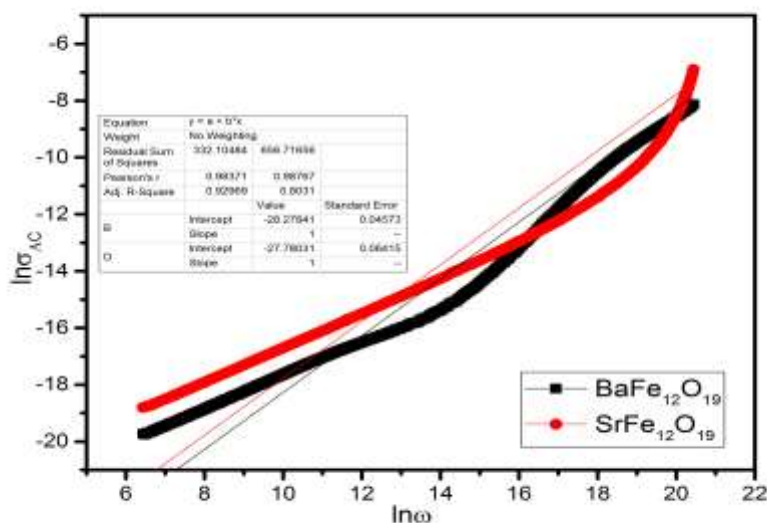


Fig. 7 The variation of $\ln\sigma_{ac}$ with $\ln\omega$ for $\text{BaFe}_{12}\text{O}_{19}$ and $\text{SrFe}_{12}\text{O}_{19}$

Table 2; calculate electrical parameters from Nova1.11

SAMPLE CODE	R _g	C _g	R _{gb}	C _{gb}	σ _{AC}
BaFe ₁₂ O ₁₉	2.89E+06Ω	9.98pF	1.89E+04Ω	5.94pF	2.95E-04
SrFe ₁₂ O ₁₉	4.49E+05Ω	8.22pF	5.41E+04Ω	7.39pF	1.01E-03

CONCLUSION

M-type BaFe₁₂O₁₉ and SrFe₁₂O₁₉ nanohexaferrites were successfully synthesized via solgel autocombustion techniques. The formation of pure single phase hexagonal ferrites was confirmed from XRD analysis, the crystallites sizes are 33.35nm for BaFe₁₂O₁₉ and 32.29nm for SrFe₁₂O₁₉ was obtained. The crystallite size varies due to variation of ionic radii with Ba²⁺ (1.35 Å) and Sr²⁺ (1.12 Å). the lattice constants slightly varies due to variation of ionic radii in the samples. The FTIR spectra of the sample show three dominants peaks in the range 400-600 cm⁻¹ which indicate the formation of the desired hexaferrites structure. The dielectric properties were studied using

impedance measurements obtained in the frequency range 100Hz-120MHz. The dielectric constant, dielectric loss and conductivity were analysed using Maxwell-Wagner model. Dielectric constant was enhanced at high frequency in the entire sample and reduction of dielectric loss is also observed with further ions substitutions. The grain boundary resistance contributes the most to the dielectric properties as indicated by Nyquist plot, whereas the Ac conductivity is the dominant conducting mechanism in the material. A high dielectric property, low energy dissipation and higher conductivity were observed with SrFe₁₂O₁₉ at higher frequency these makes it useful for higher frequency applications.

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