

## Effect of Zinc Substitution on Structural, Optical and Mechanical Properties of Ninhydrin Crystals

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### Abstract

In the present work, pure and Zn<sup>2+</sup> ions doped ninhydrin single crystals were grown by slow evaporation method. The powder X-ray diffraction analysis was done to calculate the lattice parameters of the pure and doped crystals. The vibrational frequencies of various functional groups in the crystals have been derived from FT-IR analysis. The percentage of transmittance of the crystal was recorded using the UV-Visible Spectrophotometer. The mechanical strength of the crystal was found out using Vickers microhardness test. The second harmonic generation efficiency was employed by powder Kurtz method.

**Keywords:** Organic crystal, X-Ray diffraction method, FT-IR analysis, Vickers microhardness test, second harmonic generation (SHG)

### 1. Introduction

The search for new organic materials with high optical nonlinearity is an important area due to their practical applications such as optical communication, optical computing, laser remote sensing and so forth [1-3]. Ninhydrin is one of such organic materials, with high melting point and it is a compound with two hydroxyl groups attached to the same carbon atom. It is used acid analysis of proteins. Ninhydrin is also an important analytical tool in various fields including soil biology, chemistry, agriculture, medicine and so on. R.C. Medrud reported the crystal structure of ninhydrin [4]. In the present work, we report the growth of pure and Zn<sup>2+</sup> ions doped ninhydrin single crystals.

### 2. Materials and methods

Commercially available organic chemical ninhydrin (AR grade) were used for the crystallization. The crystallization process was carried out by adding ninhydrin in 100 ml of distilled water at room temperature with constant stirring. To grow single crystals of Zn<sup>2+</sup>: ninhydrin, one mole% of Zinc nitrate was added to the saturated solution of ninhydrin. Transparent seeds of pure and doped crystals are obtained by nucleation. Then it was selected for further growth. In a span of 38 days, well developed single crystals of pure and doped ninhydrin (fig. 1 a, b) have been harvested.



Fig. 1(a) Pure ninhydrin

(b) Zinc nitrate (1 mole%) doped ninhydrin

### 3. Results and discussion

#### 3.1. X-ray diffraction analysis

A small portion of the single crystals of pure and doped ninhydrin was crushed and subjected to powder X-ray diffraction analysis. The calculated lattice parameter values for pure ninhydrin  $a = 11.3475 \text{ \AA}$ ,  $b = 6.0450 \text{ \AA}$ ,  $c = 5.7548 \text{ \AA}$ ,  $V = 390.3477 \text{ \AA}^3$  and zinc nitrate doped ninhydrin was  $a = 11.3574 \text{ \AA}$ ,  $b = 6.0607 \text{ \AA}$ ,  $c = 5.7557 \text{ \AA}$ ,  $V = 391.6866 \text{ \AA}^3$ . The changes in lattice parameters are due to incorporation of metal ions in the lattice of ninhydrin crystal [5]. The XRD pattern reveals (Fig. 2) that the  $\text{Zn}^{2+}$  ions have entered the crystal lattice of pure ninhydrin.

#### 3.2. FTIR Analysis:

Fourier infrared spectrum was recorded using KBr pellet technique in the range of  $400\text{--}4000 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  and the recorded FTIR spectrum is shown in figure 3. Vibrational spectroscopy provides an important tool to understand the chemical bonding. The peaks at  $3452.98 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ ,  $3302.83 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  and  $3243.39 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  are all due to O-H symmetric stretching. The wave number  $3088.40 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ ,  $3088.09 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  belongs to the aromatic C-H stretching for pure and  $\text{Zn}^{2+}$  doped ninhydrin. The recorded peak at  $1748.09 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ ,  $1748.29 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  is due to carbonyl (C=O) stretching. The skeletal vibrations of aromatic rings are observed at  $1591.05 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ ,  $1592.23 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  in both pure and doped ninhydrin [6].

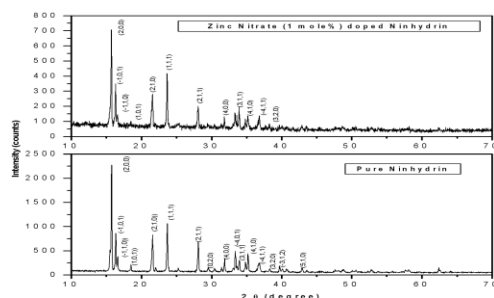


Fig. 2. The powder XRD pattern of grown crystals

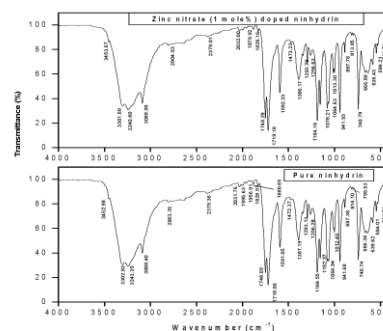


Fig. 3. FTIR spectra of grown crystals

### 3.3. UV-Visible analysis:

The UV-Visible spectrum gives information about the structure of the molecule that the absorption of UV and visible light involves in the promotion of electrons in  $\sigma$  and  $\pi$  orbital from the ground state to higher energy state. The UV transmission spectrum of grown samples is shown in figure 4. The lower cutoff wavelength is found to be 278 nm and upper cutoff wavelength is 430 nm. The small peak at 339 nm is due to  $n-\pi^*$  transition [7]. The band gap was found to be 2.8 eV.

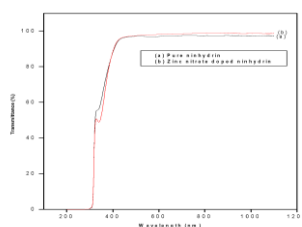


Fig. 4. The UV-Visible transmittance spectrum of grown crystals.

### 3.4. EDAX Analysis

The EDAX has been performed to identify the elements present in the crystals. From the analysis it is found that 0.07% of  $Zn^{2+}$  ion is incorporated into the interstitial sites of the ninhydrin crystals.

### 3.5. Microhardness studies

Micro hardness measurements were carried out using Leitz weitzler micro-hardness tester fitted with a diamond indenter. The plot between hardness number and load is shown in fig 5. It is observed that the hardness number increases with increase in load and it reveals that the pure and doped crystal exhibits reverse indentation effect. By plotting  $\log p$  versus  $\log d$ , the value of the work hardening coefficient  $n$  was found to be greater than two for pure and zinc doped ninhydrin [8]. Hence, it is concluded that pure and metal doped ninhydrin crystals are also soft materials.

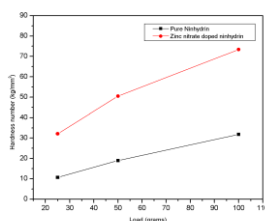


Fig.5. Plot of hardness vs load for pure and doped ninhydrin crystals.

### 3.6. Nonlinear optical studies:

The study of nonlinear optical conversion efficiency was carried out using the modified experimental setup of Kurtz and Perry [9, 10]. A Q-switched Nd:YAG laser beam of wavelength 1064 nm, with input energy 0.701 Joule with a repetition rate of 10 Hz was used. It was found that the efficiency of zinc doped ninhydrin crystal is 1.37 times greater than KDP, where as the efficiency of pure ninhydrin is 1.28 times greater than KDP. The SHG efficiency of zinc doped ninhydrin was slightly enhanced due to the incorporation of metal ions in the crystal lattice.

### 4. Conclusion

Pure and metal  $Zn^{2+}$  ions doped ninhydrin were successfully grown using slow evaporation method. The powder XRD studies show that there is a small variation in lattice parameter values because of the contribution of metal dopants. FTIR spectrum gives the various functional groups present in the structure. Optical transmission studies confirm that transparency of doped crystals is greater than pure ninhydrin in the entire visible region. Micro harness measurements imply that the pure and doped ninhydrin comes under the soft materials category. The SHG efficiency of the pure and metal  $Zn^{2+}$  ions doped ninhydrin crystal was found to be 1.28 and 1.37 times that of KDP.

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