

# Gain Enhancement of Microstrip Patch Antenna Using Metamaterial Superstrate

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**Abstract** — In this work, a gain enhancement of conventional microstrip patch antenna has been treated for WLAN applications. About 1.3dB gain enhancement, compared to a conventional patch, has been achieved by loading the microstrip patch with a metamaterial superstrate composed of 2x3 array of Square Split Ring Resonator. Simulations have been carried out using Ansys HFSS. Measured results have been taken to validate the simulation result.

**Index Terms** — Metamaterials, microstrip patch antenna.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Modern wireless communication system requires high data rate that depends on the gain of the antenna. Towards this, metamaterial starts playing a very important role in the design of an antenna [1]-[3]. In [4], gain enhancement of microstrip patch antenna (MPA) is achieved by using graded index dielectric superstrate. In [5], a planar two-layer superstrate over a printed patch antenna to enhance the broadside gain is considered. The problem of enhancing the directivity of an aperture coupled microstrip patch antenna using one dimensional electromagnetic bandgap (EBG) structure is treated in [6]. It was found that the directivity level, beamwidth as well as reflection coefficient and gain could be enhanced by using superstrate with two layers. In [7], study of performance parameters of patch antennas with different feeding methods is presented and compared with that of patch antennas without dielectric superstrate. It was found that the directivity level, beam width as well as reflection coefficient and VSWR could be further enhanced by using superstrate with two layers rather than one, regardless of the feeding method. In [8], a meandered line-double split ring resonator (DSRR) superstrate loaded high gain circular patch antenna is presented for X-band and showed that the superstrate loading has minor effect on the return loss characteristics but a major effect on the gain characteristics of

the circular patch. Scope for miniaturization and compactness of an antenna leads to the design of novel antenna structure loaded with metamaterial. Hence, in the proposed work, a metamaterial superstrate loaded microstrip patch antenna is designed on low cost, FR4 epoxy substrate for WLAN application.

## II. ANTENNA DESIGN

### A. Microstrip patch antenna without superstrate

The microstrip patch antenna with co-axial feeding is designed using ANSYS HFSS on a less expensive, widely available FR4 epoxy substrate with relative permittivity of 4.4 and dielectric loss tangent of 0.02 for 5.5 GHz WLAN application. Figure 1 shows simulated top view of MPA. The dimension of the patch and the substrate is 12mm x 16mm x 0.1mm and 26mm x 30mm x 1.6mm respectively. The equations to calculate the dimension of patch antenna are given in [9].

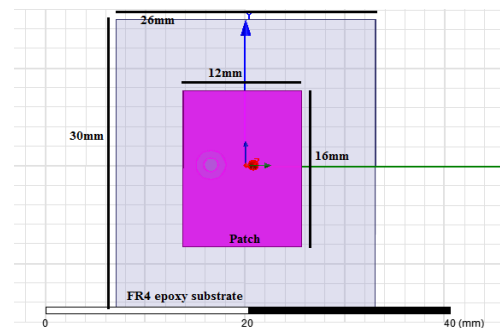


Fig. 1. Simulated top view of rectangular MPA.

### B. Proposed MPA with metamaterial superstrate

The proposed design consists of metamaterial superstrate loaded microstrip patch antenna. Figure 2 (a) shows the geometry of square split ring resonator metamaterial. The dimension of the ring is 6mm x 6mm. The gap width is 1.5mm. Figure 2 (b) shows the simulated

metamaterial superstrate loaded microstrip patch antenna. The metamaterial superstrate is composed of 2x3 array of Square Split Ring Resonator on a FR4 epoxy material. The superstrate dimension is 26mm x 30mm x 1.6mm and is placed at a height of 5mm from the substrate. The fabricated metamaterial superstrate loaded MPA prototype is shown in Fig. 2 (c).

### III. SIMULATED AND MEASURED RESULTS

The S-parameters for metamaterial unit cell is shown in Fig. 3 (a) S11 and S21 parameters crosses at 4.8 GHz and 6.1 GHz. Hence, the unit cell structure reflects the electromagnetic waves in this band [10]. The measurements are taken on Vector Network Analyzer (Rohde and Schwarz, German make ZVK Model No. 1127.8651). The simulated and measured return loss of microstrip patch antenna with and without superstrate loading is shown in Fig. 3 (b). The summary of simulation and tested results is shown in Table 1.

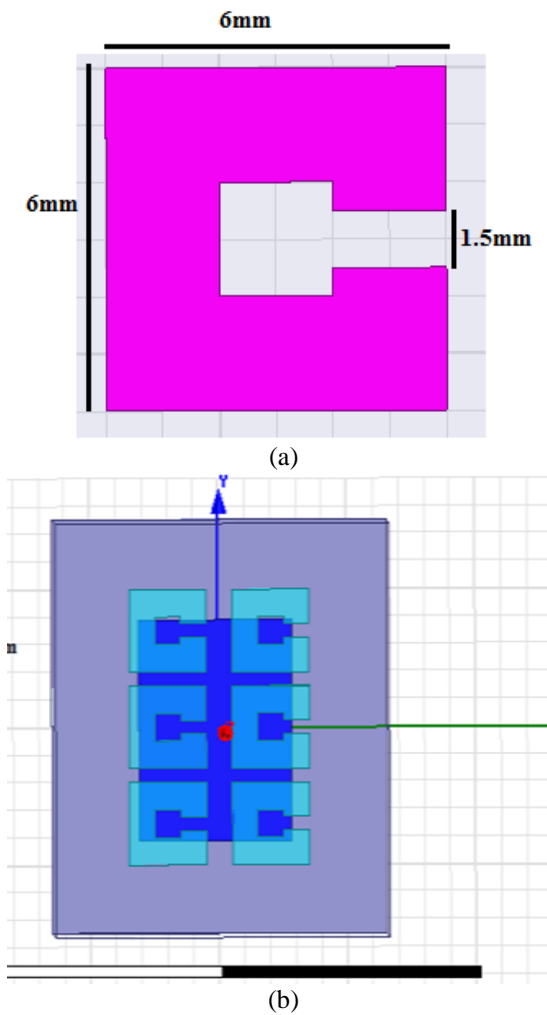


Fig. 2. (a) Metamaterial unit cell, (b) simulated metamaterial superstrate loaded MPA, and (c) fabricated metamaterial superstrate loaded MPA.

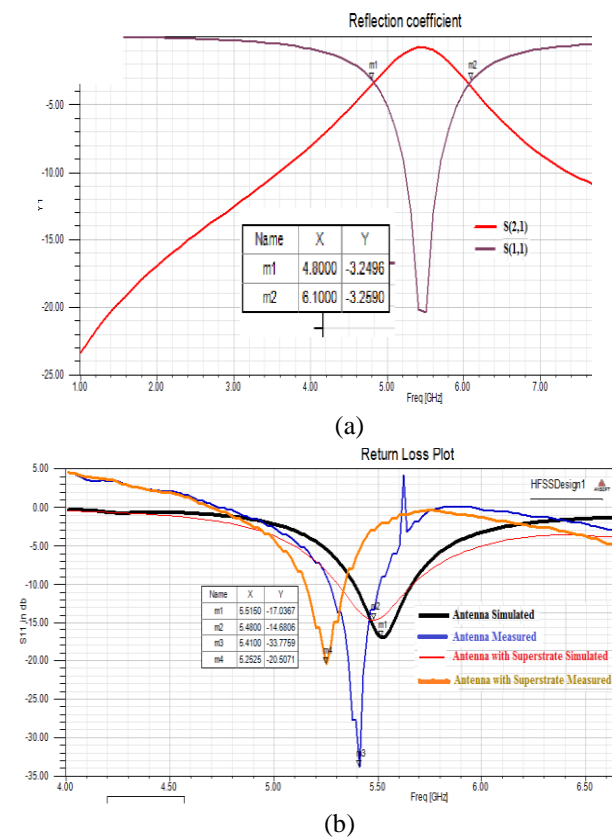


Fig. 3. (a) S-parameters for the metamaterial unit cell, and (b) simulated and measured |S11| responses of the microstrip patch antenna with and without superstrate loading.

Table 1: Summary of simulation and tested results

Parameters	MPA without Superstrate		MPA with Superstrate	
	Simulated	Fabricated	Simulated	Fabricated
Resonant frequency (in GHz)	5.51	5.41	5.48	5.25
Return loss (in dB)	-17.03	-33.77	-14	-20

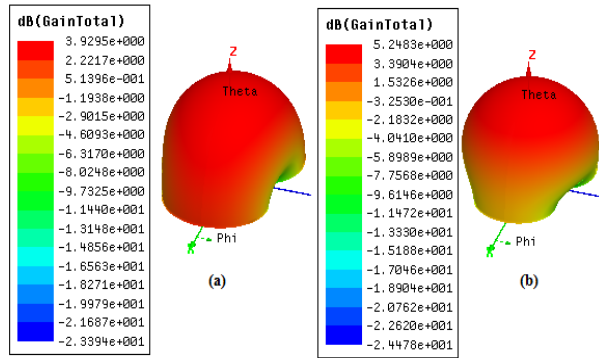


Fig. 4. (a), (b) Simulated 3D gain plot for microstrip patch antenna without and with superstrate loading.



Fig. 5. Experimental setup for the estimation of antenna gain.

From Fig. 4 it is clearly seen from simulation that the antenna gain is increased by 1.2dB when metamaterial superstrate is included in the system.

The experimental setup for the gain measurement is shown in Fig. 5. Two steps were used for the estimation of antenna gain. In the first step estimation of gain without metamaterial superstrate is made followed by estimation of gain with metamaterial superstrate. For gain calculation equation in [7] is used:

$$G(dB) = 10 \log \left( \frac{P_r}{P_t} \right) - G_t(dB) - 20 \log \left( \frac{\lambda_0}{4\pi R} \right) (dB). \quad (1)$$

Where  $P_t$  and  $P_r$  are transmitted and received powers respectively.  $G_t$  is the gain of the pyramidal horn antenna equal to 17dB.  $R$  is the distance between transmitting antenna and antenna under test. The gains obtained from measurements are 3.7dB and 5dB for patch antenna without and with metamaterial superstrate loading respectively. The enhancement in gain is better with less number of rings on the FR4 epoxy superstrate than that obtained in [10].

HFSS simulation of variation of axial ratio with frequency is shown in Fig. 6. At 5.5 GHz, the axial ratio is 26.8dB and 35dB for MPA with and without superstrate respectively. This indicates that the antennas are linearly polarized.

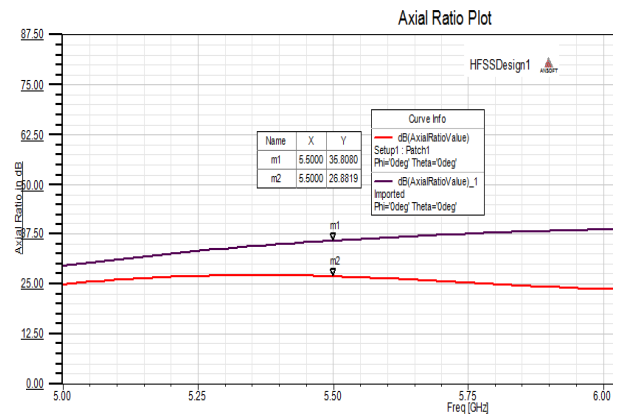


Fig. 6. Variation of axial ratio with frequency.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

A Square Split Ring Resonator metamaterial superstrate loaded microstrip patch antenna for gain enhancement has been presented in this paper for WLAN applications. A comparison of the characteristics of the proposed antenna with a conventional patch antenna shows that the superstrate loading has minor effect on the return loss characteristics but a major effect on the gain characteristics of the patch. The superstrate loading has enhanced the gain by about 1.3dB as compared to a conventional patch

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author would like to thank the Department of Applied Science, Gulbarga University, Karnataka for testing the antennas.

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