



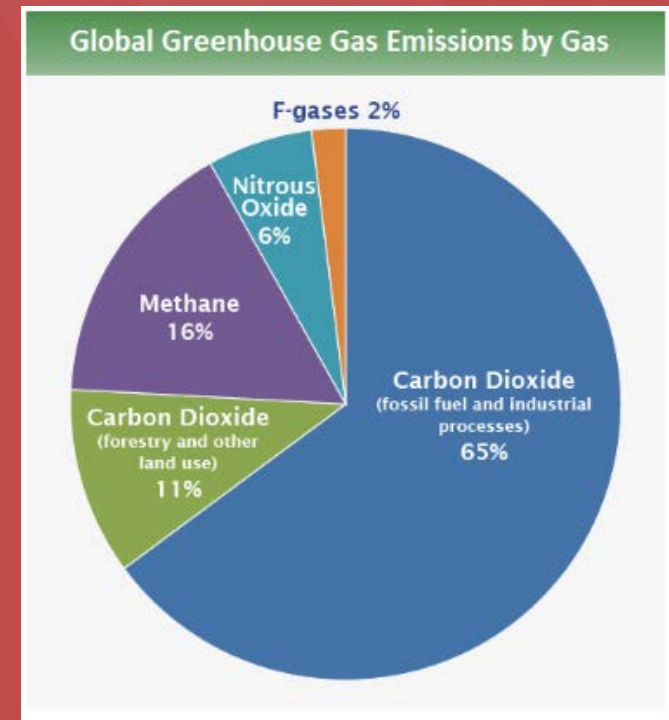
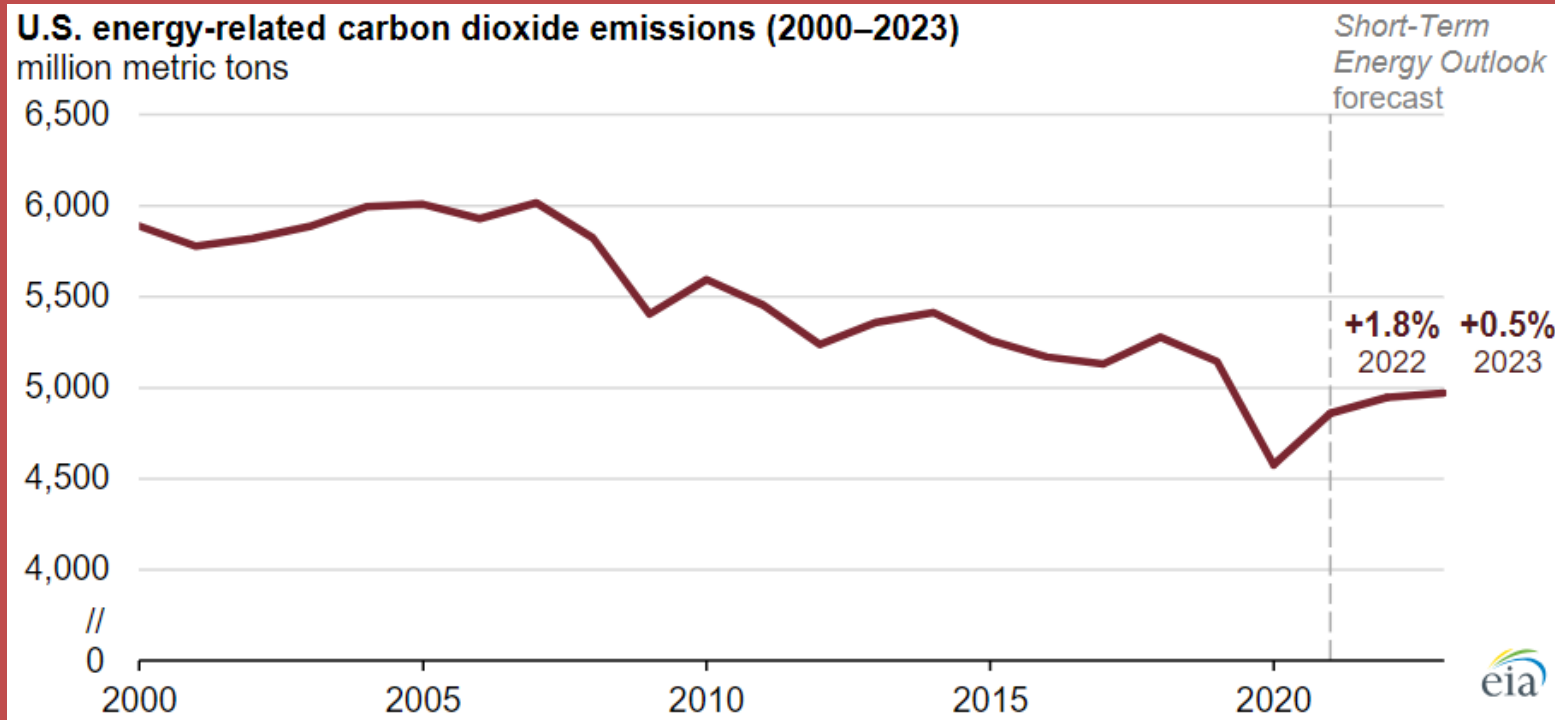
## IAEA Technical Meeting on Emerging Applications of Plasma Science & Technology

# Non-thermal plasma catalytic dry reforming of methane over Ni-Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> supported modified-Titania catalysts: Effect of process conditions on syngas production and DFT analysis

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# Research Background



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, [Short-Term Energy Outlook](#)

**CO<sub>2</sub> emissions increase in 2023**

**CO<sub>2</sub> & CH<sub>4</sub> remain major constituents of GHG**

**Fossil fuel consumption is primary source of global GHG emissions**

# Research Background



## Initiatives to tackle greenhouse gases (CO<sub>2</sub>-CH<sub>4</sub>)

**IAEA aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions**

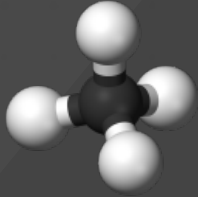
**UNDP is committed to 50% carbon footprint reduction by 2030**

**Paris Agreement**  
**NET ZERO**  
**2050**

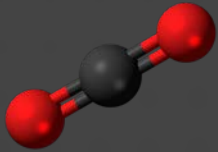
# Solution

## Non-Thermal Plasma Technology

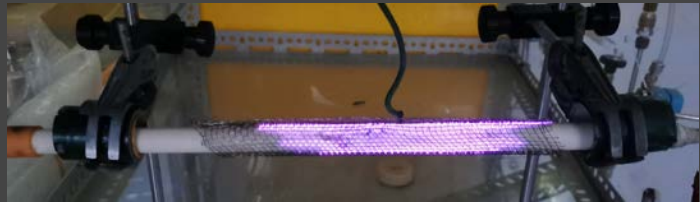
for catalytic dry reforming of  $\text{CH}_4$  to produce syngas ( $\text{H}_2$ -CO)



Methane



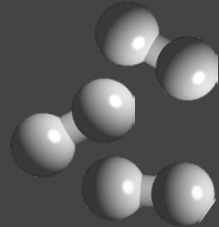
Carbon dioxide



Non-Thermal Plasma Plasma



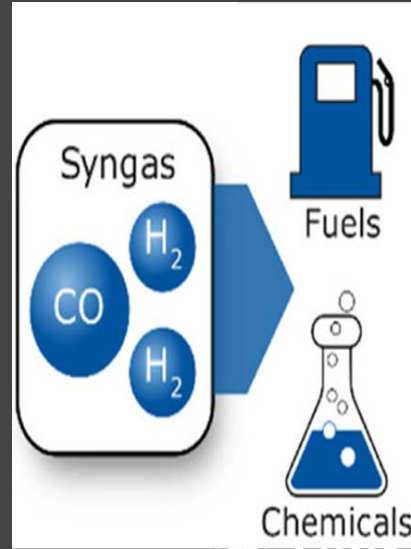
Catalyst



Hydrogen



Carbon monoxide



# Global Syngas Demand & Market Size



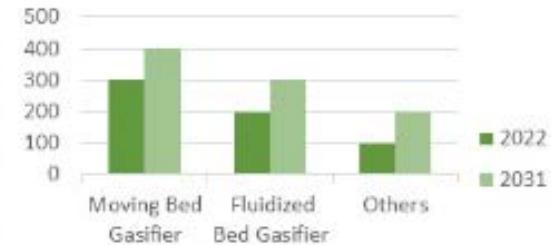
North America

**CAGR  
(2023-2031)**

**11.6%**

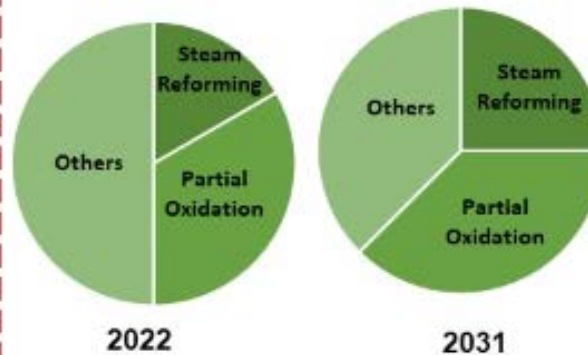


**By Gasifier Type:**

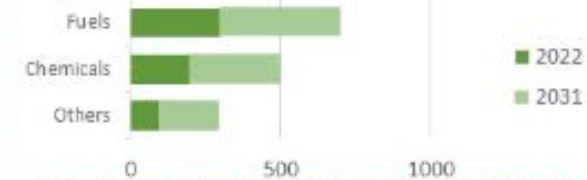


**Market Volume:  
2,80,630  
MWth (2022)**

**By Production Technology:**



**By Application:**



**Key Players:**



Market size value in 2022	USD 2,80,630 MWth
Volume forecast in 2031	USD 7,38,662 MWth
Growth rate CAGR	CAGR of 11.6% from 2023 to 2031

# Global Market & Expected Economic Analysis



## Estimated Lab Scale Yearly Total Revenue

**\$15 M**  
**CO**

**CO Production Yearly = 96 kg**

Output/operation hrs:  
3000ml/hour, 8h/day, 20 days/month  
Total CO per month: 9.6 l  
Parameter: 60 sccm FFR, 1.5 cm ID & 1 kW power  
Price per 50 liter = \$ 6586.39

**Hydrogen Production Yearly = 407.7 kg**

Output/operation hrs:  
3000ml/hour, 8h/day, 20 days/month  
Total H<sub>2</sub> per month in liter = 480 l  
Total H<sub>2</sub> per year in liter = 5760 l  
Price per kg = \$ 21.28

**\$8,676**  
**Hydrogen**

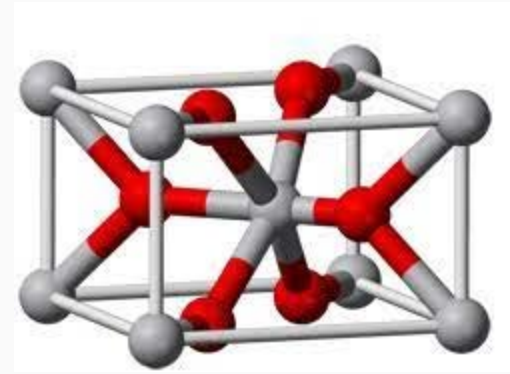
# Literature Review

Feed	Catalyst and Parameters	Product	Reference
<b>Steam-CH<sub>4</sub>, CO<sub>2</sub> gas mixture</b>	Catalyst = Cu/ZnO/Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub> /MgO Plasma power = 20 W, Feed flow: Steam = 25 ml/min, S/C = 4.5, catalyst = 200 mg	H <sub>2</sub> = 88 % CO = 25 % CO <sub>2</sub> = 65 %	(Geng et al., 2022)
<b>Water-CH<sub>4</sub> gas mixture</b>	Catalyst = Cu/CeO <sub>2</sub> Plasma SIE = 19.8 J/L, Feed flow: Steam = 0.5 ml/min, CH <sub>4</sub> = 50 ml/min, catalyst = 1 g	H <sub>2</sub> = 248.7 CO = 11.25 ( $\mu\text{molg}^{-1}\text{h}^{-1}$ )	(Bajpai et al., 2023)
<b>CH<sub>4</sub>, CO<sub>2</sub> - Ar gas mixture</b>	Catalyst = Ni/Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub> Plasma power = 3.9 W, Feed flow = 60 ml/min, CH <sub>4</sub> /CO <sub>2</sub> = 1, catalyst = 12 pallets	H <sub>2</sub> = 42 % CO = 34 %	(Stanley et al., 2023)
<b>CH<sub>4</sub> - CO<sub>2</sub> gas mixture</b>	Catalyst = Ni/CeO <sub>2</sub> /C Plasma power = 40 W, Feed flow: Feed flow = 50 ml/min, CH <sub>4</sub> /CO <sub>2</sub> = 1	H <sub>2</sub> = 50.0 % CO = 53.2 %	(Wang et al., 2020)
<b>CH<sub>4</sub> - CO<sub>2</sub> gas mixture</b>	Catalyst = Ni/CeZrO <sub>2</sub> Plasma power = 200 W, Feed flow: Feed flow = 50 ml/min, CH <sub>4</sub> /CO <sub>2</sub> = 1, catalyst = 0.5 g	H <sub>2</sub> /CO = 0.98	(Dai et al., 2021)

# Why Ni-Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>/TiO<sub>2</sub>?

## Why TiO<sub>2</sub> as Catalyst Support

- Environmental-friendly, nontoxic and inexpensive semiconductor material .
- Mainly used in photo-catalysis reaction. However, lack of studies using TiO<sub>2</sub> as catalyst support in other applications including Dry reforming of methane (DRM).
- Advantages of TiO<sub>2</sub> as a catalyst support:
  - Acts as active metal support
  - Also acts as the reducible oxide (catalyst).
  - Provides unique electronic interactions between the metal & support.



## Why Ni active metal and Cobalt as Catalyst Promoter

- Nickel (Ni) → abundant, commercially used catalyst & active metal in thermal/nonthermal applications
- However, Ni suffers from instability and deactivation.
- To tackle these problems, noble metals like Pt, La, Au, and Ag can be used as catalyst promoters, but these expensive and rare metals makes the catalyst commercially infeasible.
- Cobalt (Co) → as catalyst promoter, Co can increase stability and activity of Ni.
  - Inexpensive as compared to noble and rare earth metals



# Methodology

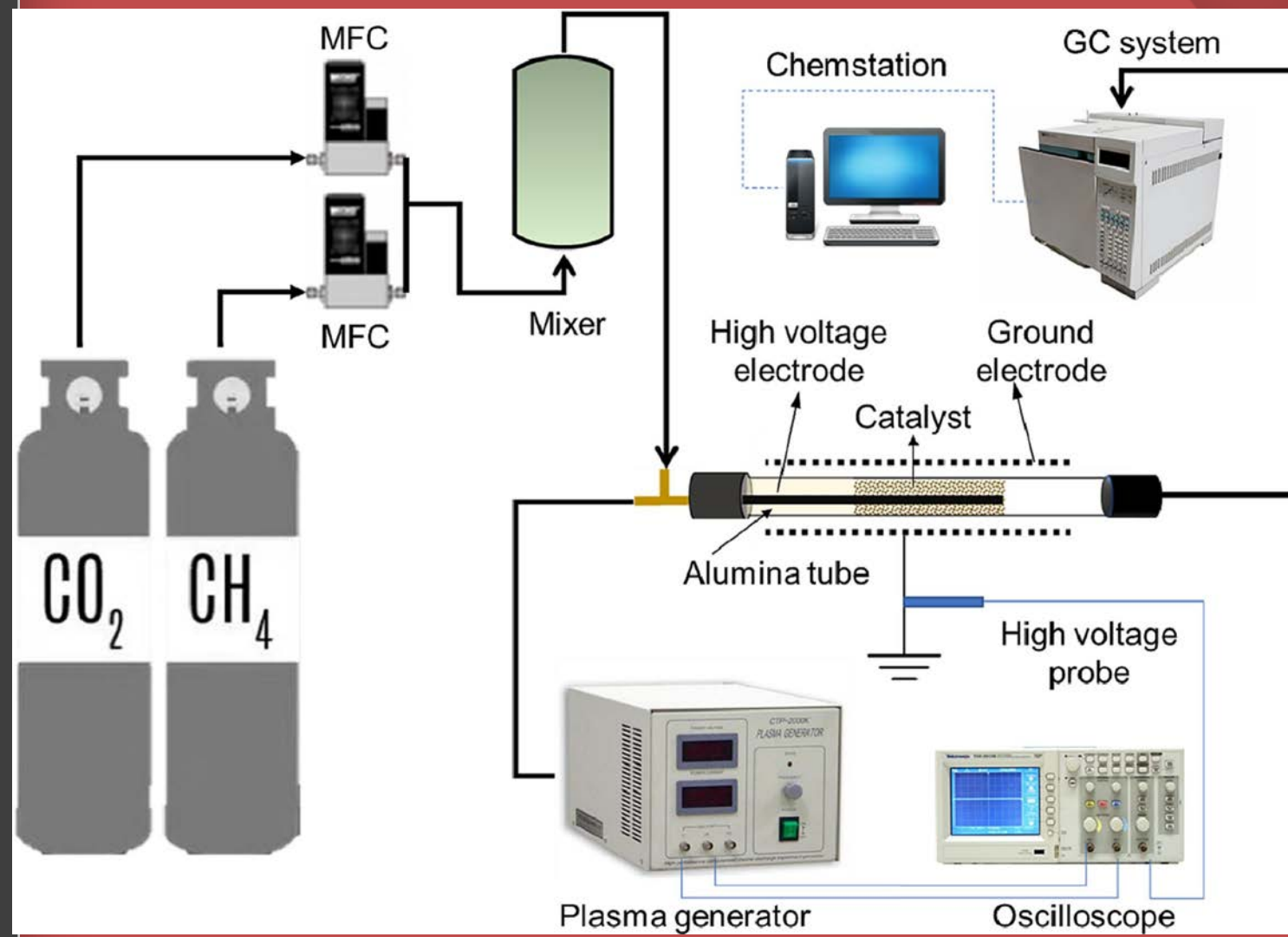
**Alumina tube packed-bed DBD dimensions:** Length = 40 cm, ID = 10 cm, OD = 12 cm

**High voltage (HV) positive electrode:** steel tube = 4 mm diameter

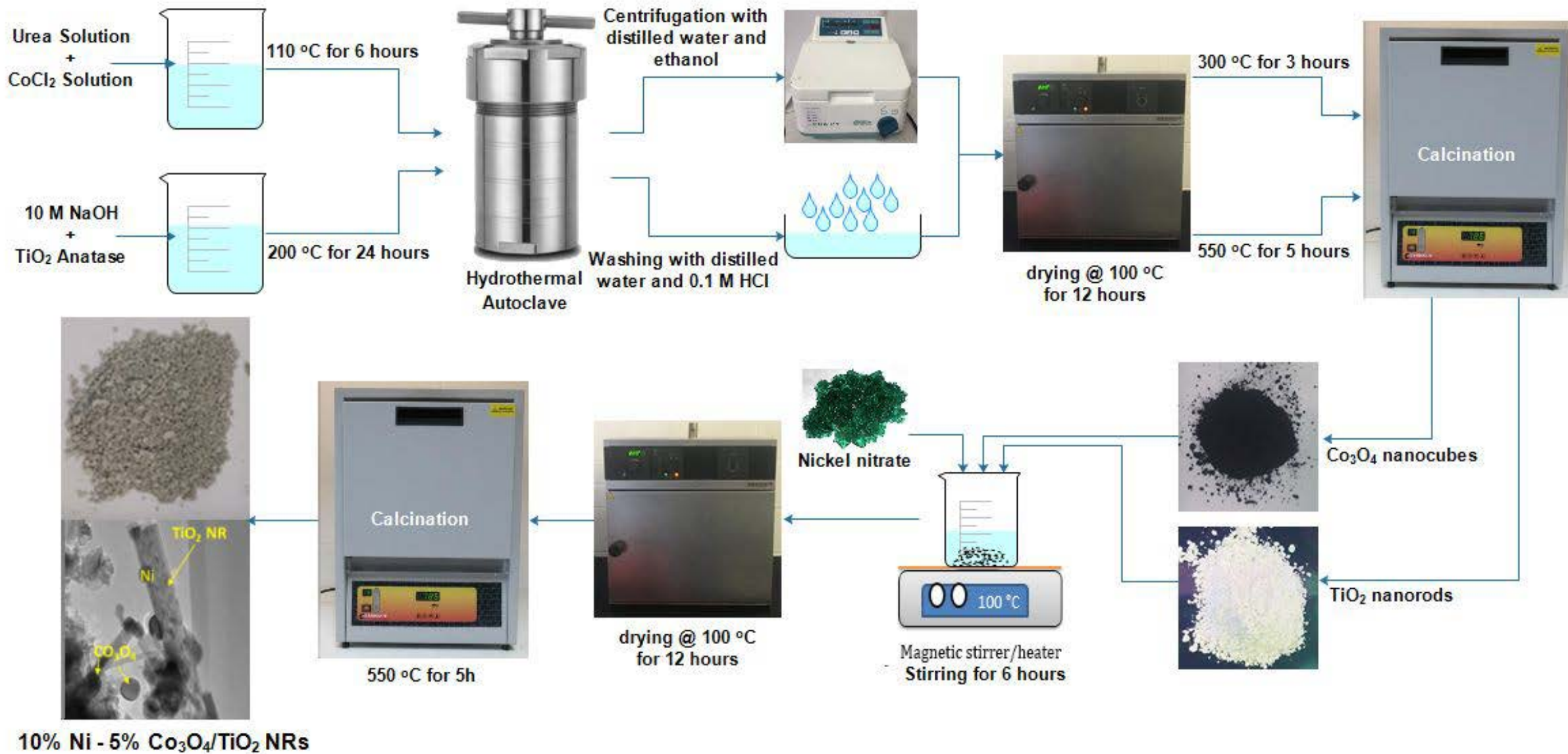
**Ground electrode:** stainless-steel mesh = 20 cm

**Reaction Conditions:** catalyst loading (0.3 g), total feed flow rate (20 ml min<sup>-1</sup>), CH<sub>4</sub>/CO<sub>2</sub> feed ratio (1/1), GHSV (1200h<sup>-1</sup>) and SIE (300 J ml<sup>-1</sup>)

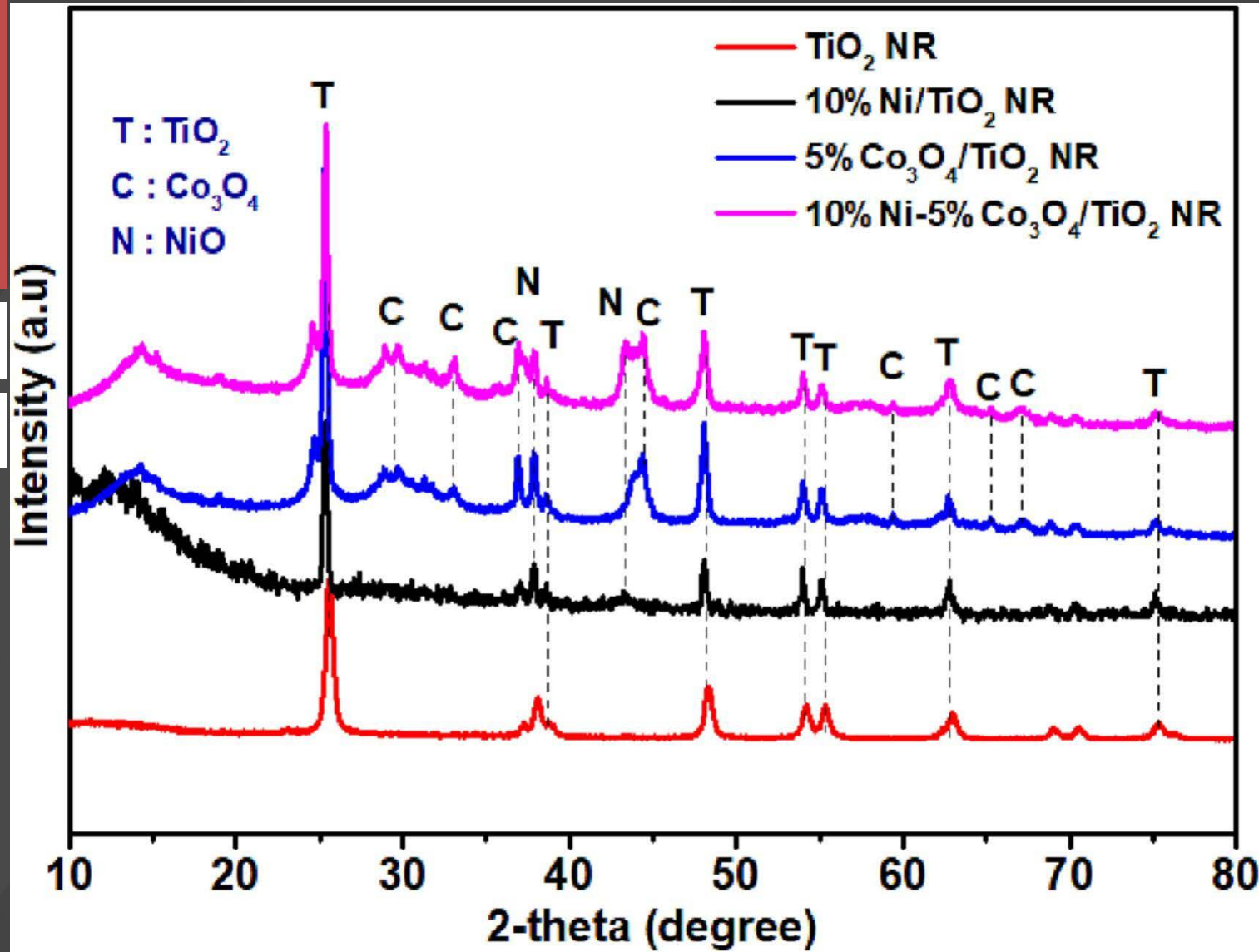
# Experimental Setup



# Schematics of Catalyst Preparation



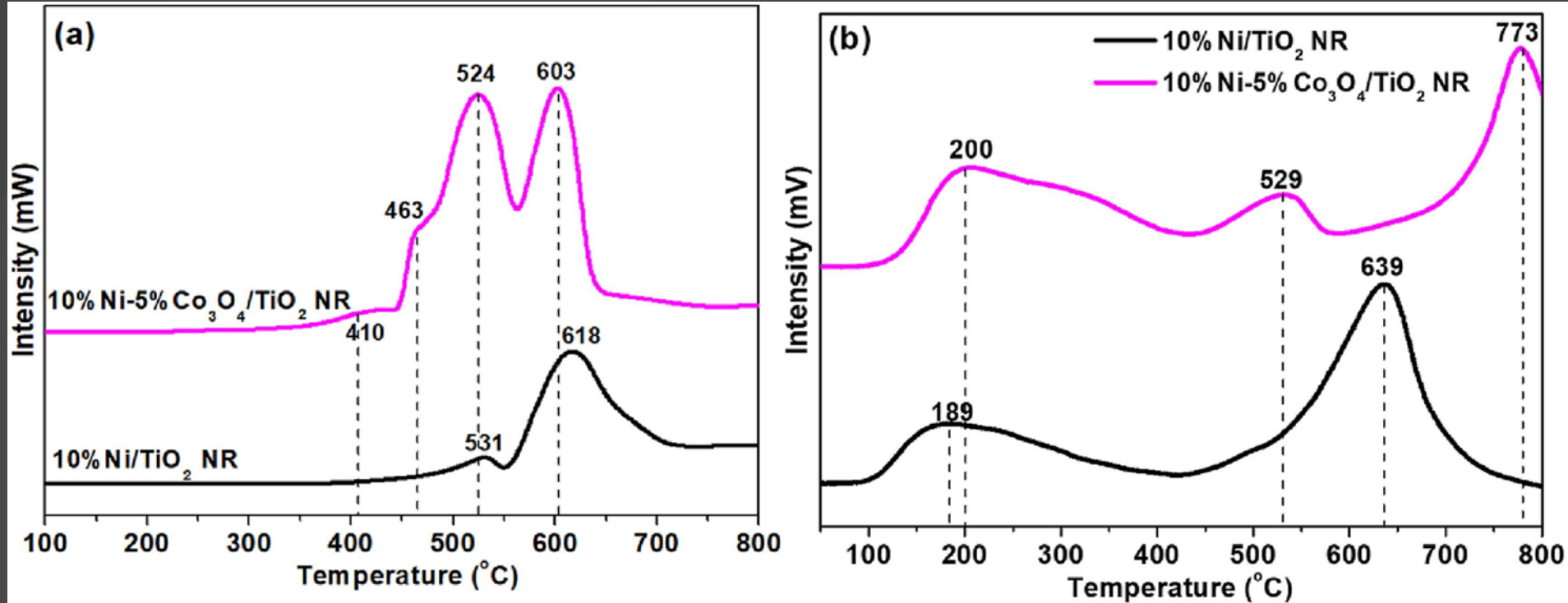
# Catalyst Characterization



## XRD profiles of various catalysts:

- TiO<sub>2</sub> NR catalyst has diffraction peaks at  $2\theta = 25.4^\circ$  (101),  $38.0^\circ$  (004),  $48.1^\circ$  (200),  $53.0^\circ$  (105),  $55.2^\circ$  (211) &  $62.9^\circ$  (204), corresponds to **tetragonal TiO<sub>2</sub>** in pure **anatase** phase
- **Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocubes** detected at  $2\theta = 30.0^\circ$  (220),  $36.9^\circ$  (222),  $44.4^\circ$  (400),  $59.4^\circ$  (511) &  $65.4^\circ$  (440)
- **Rhombohedral NiO** phase was detected for both 10%Ni/TiO<sub>2</sub> NR & 10%Ni-5%Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>/TiO<sub>2</sub> catalysts at  $2\theta = 37.2^\circ$  (101) &  $43.3^\circ$  (012)

# Catalyst Characterization

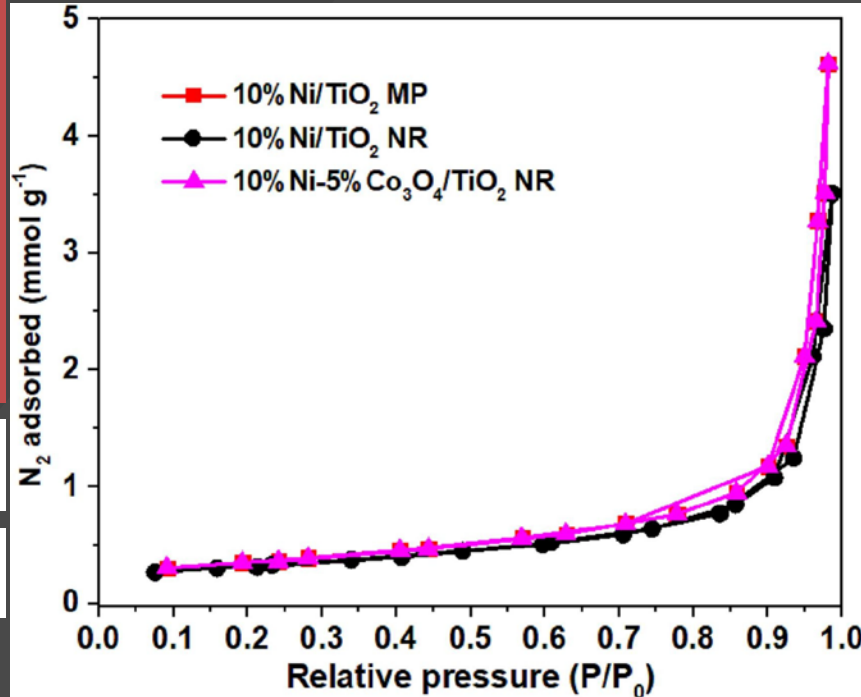


(a) H<sub>2</sub>-TPR; and (b) CO<sub>2</sub>-TPD profiles; for 10%Ni/TiO<sub>2</sub> NR and 10%Ni-5%Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>/TiO<sub>2</sub> NR catalysts:

- 10%Ni-5%Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>/TiO<sub>2</sub> NR displays higher H<sub>2</sub> consumption of **2.288 mmol g<sup>-1</sup>** than the 10%Ni/TiO<sub>2</sub> NR (**1.269 mmol g<sup>-1</sup>**) catalyst.
- Higher basic sites of **243.8 μmol g<sup>-1</sup>** are acquired for 10%Ni-5%Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>/TiO<sub>2</sub> NR than the 10%Ni/TiO<sub>2</sub> which confirms the enhanced basicity by synergistic effect of NiCo<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> supported TiO<sub>2</sub> NR catalyst.

# Results and discussion

## Catalyst characterization



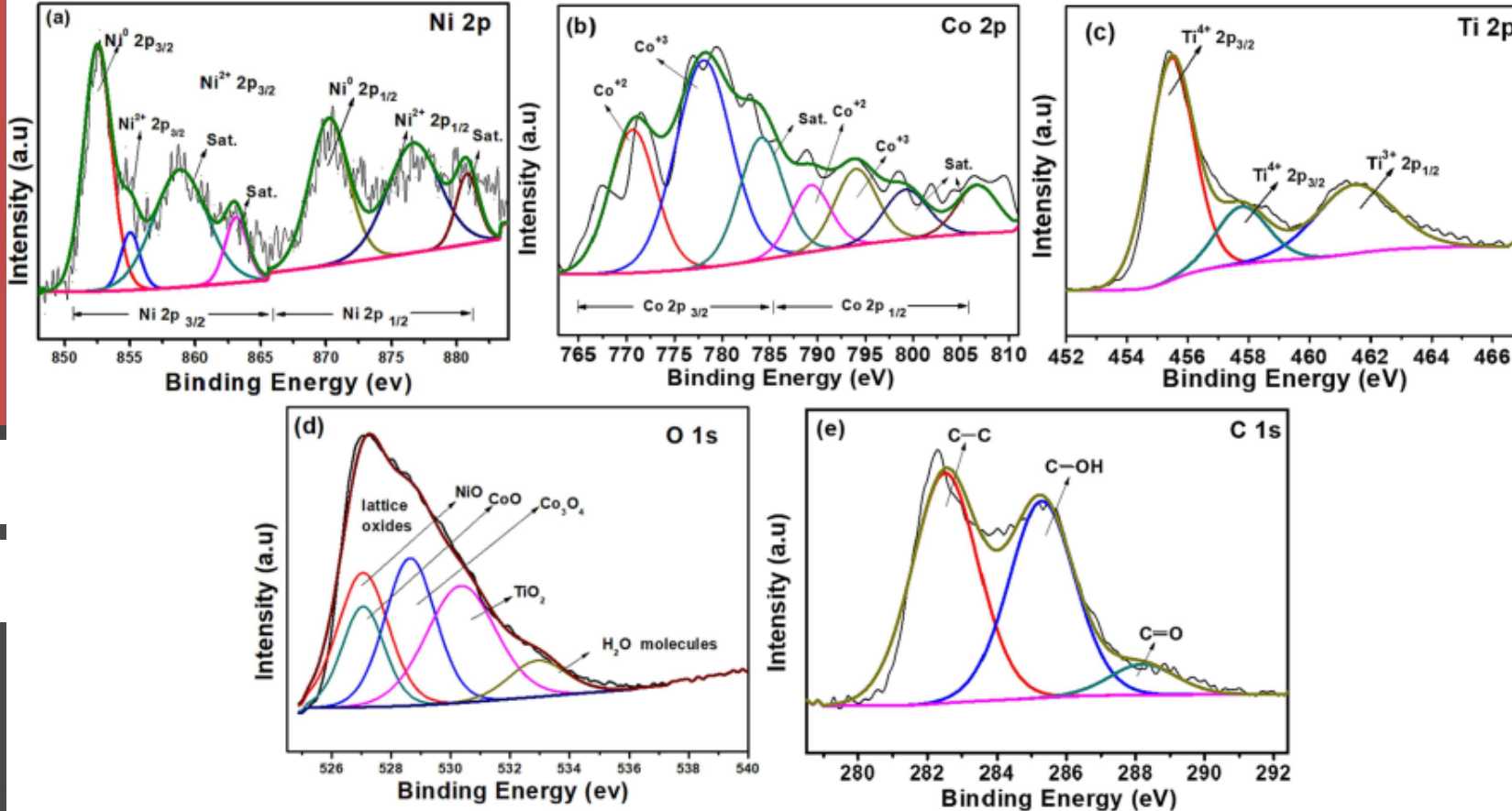
Catalysts	$S_{\text{BET}}$ ( $\text{m}^2\text{g}^{-1}$ )	$V_t$ ( $\text{cm}^3\text{g}^{-1}$ )	$V_{2-50}$ , BJH ( $\text{cm}^3\text{g}^{-1}$ )	$V_{0.5-2.0}$ , t-plot ( $\text{cm}^3\text{g}^{-1}$ )	$V_{0.2-0.5}$ , MP ( $\text{cm}^3\text{g}^{-1}$ )	APD (nm)
10%Ni/TiO <sub>2</sub> MP	8.3	0.079	0.074	0.004	0.002	38.0
10%Ni/TiO <sub>2</sub> NR	25.4	0.160	0.145	0.012	–	25.2
10%Ni- 5%Co <sub>3</sub> O <sub>4</sub> -TiO <sub>2</sub> NR	23.1	0.122	0.111	0.014	0.003	21.0

BET analysis of surface properties of Ni/Co supported TiO<sub>2</sub> NR or MP catalysts.

**N<sub>2</sub> adsorption-desorption isotherm plots for 10%Ni/TiO<sub>2</sub> NR, 10%Ni/TiO<sub>2</sub> MP & 10%Ni-5%Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>/TiO<sub>2</sub> NR catalysts:**

- All catalysts exhibit **mesoporous material** with Type III and H3 hysteresis loop isotherm ascribed to the steep increase at high relative pressure ( $P/P_0 > 0.90$ ) with capillary condensation steps at  $P/P_0$  range of 0.7–0.9 indicating the presence of **mesopores**.

# Catalyst characterization



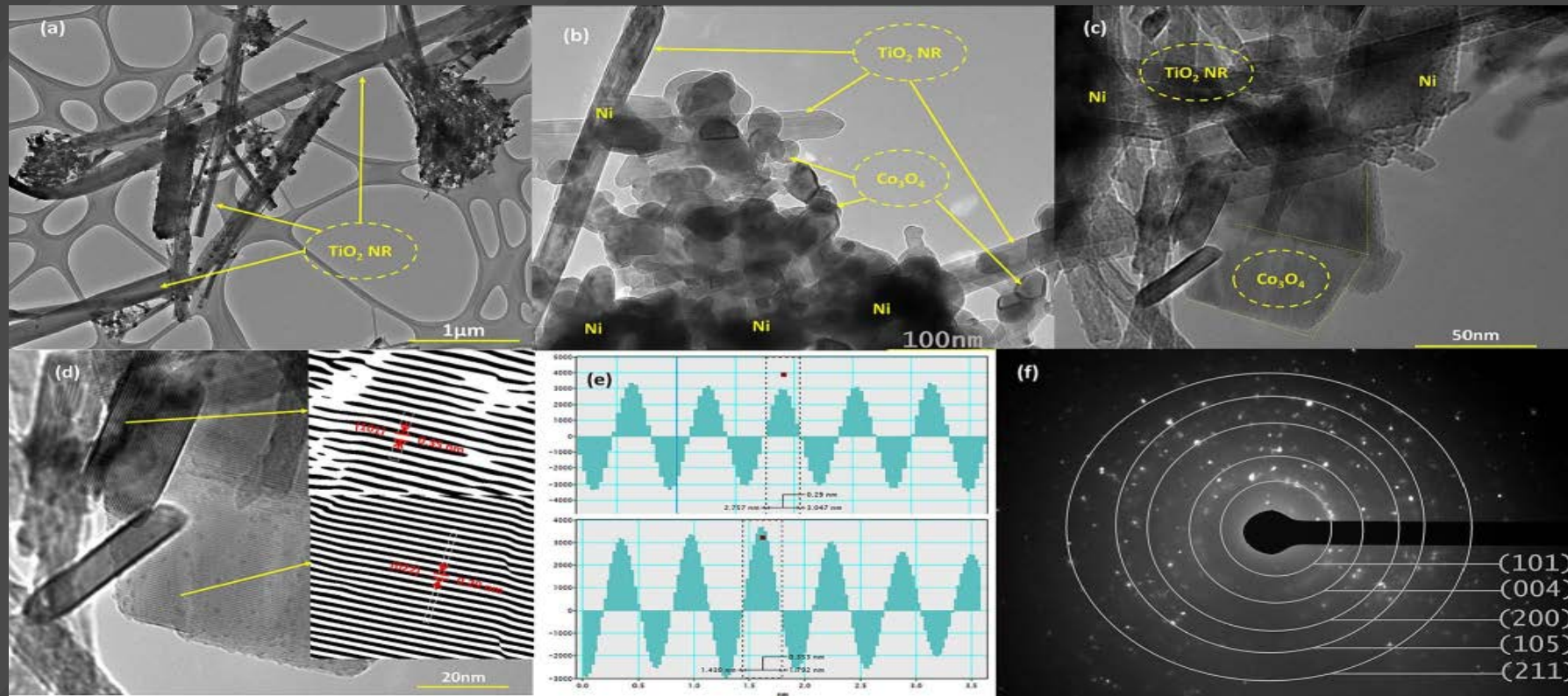
## XPS analysis of 10%Ni-5%Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>/TiO<sub>2</sub> NR catalyst:

- X-ray spectrum shows 2 valence states of Ni i.e., **Ni<sup>2+</sup>** & **Ni<sup>0</sup>**.
- Co spectrum reveals 2 oxidation states corresponding to **Co<sup>2+</sup>** & **Co<sup>3+</sup>**.
- Ti peak confirms that the main valence state is **Ti<sup>4+</sup>**.

XPS analysis of 10%Ni-5%Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>/TiO<sub>2</sub> NR catalyst; High resolution spectrum of (a) Ni 2p; (b) Co 2p; (c) Ti 2p; (d) O 1s; and (e) C 1s.:

# Results and discussion

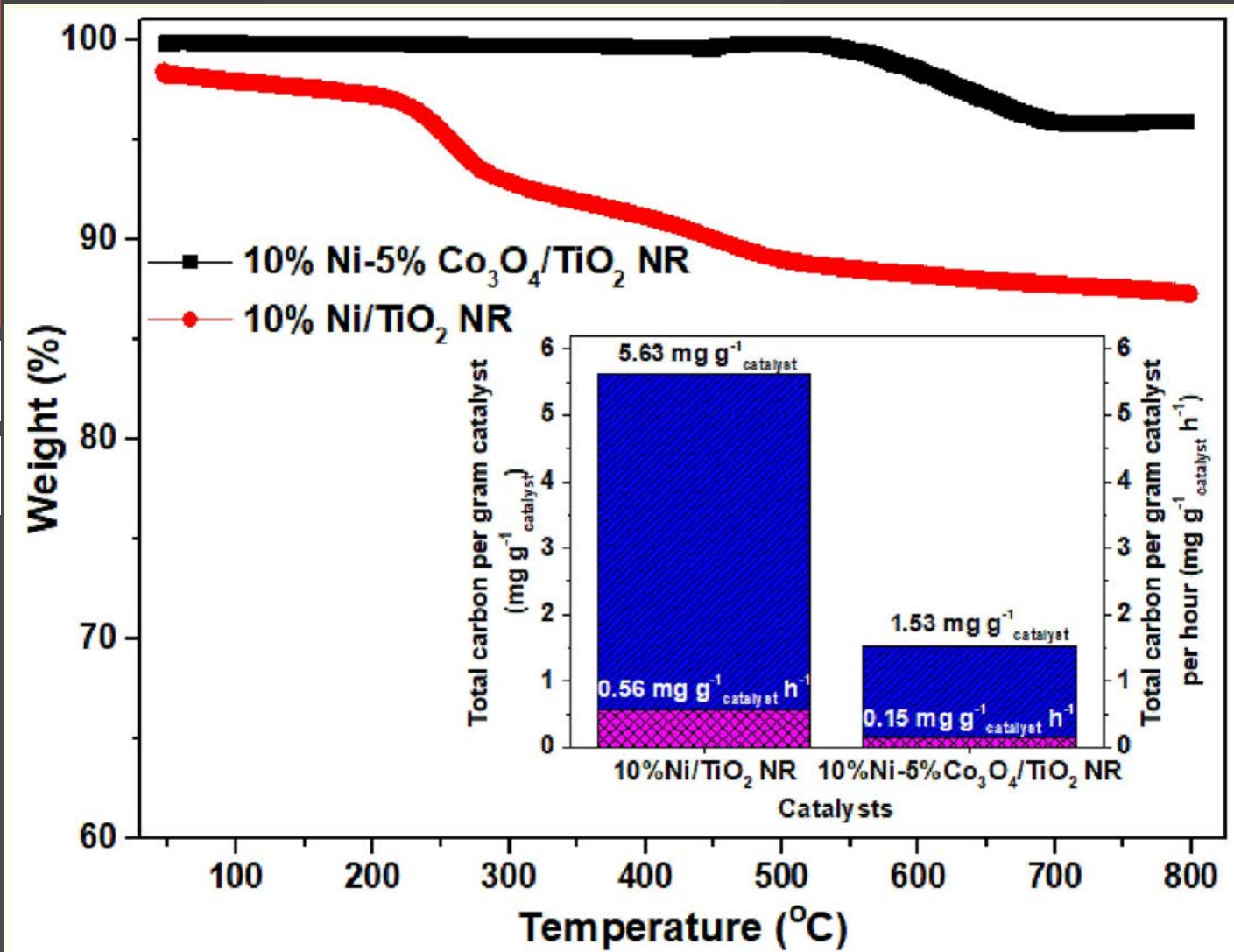
## Catalyst characterization



- (a–e) HRTEM micrographs with different magnifications and their respective d-spacing; and (f) selected area (electron) diffraction (SAED) pattern, for the 10%Ni–5%Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>/TiO<sub>2</sub> NR:
- Composite catalyst exhibit NR morphology, could be ascribed to TiO<sub>2</sub> covered with **Ni nanoparticles** & **Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocubes**.
  - SAED pattern establishes presence of **Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocubes**.

# Results and discussion

## Catalyst characterization

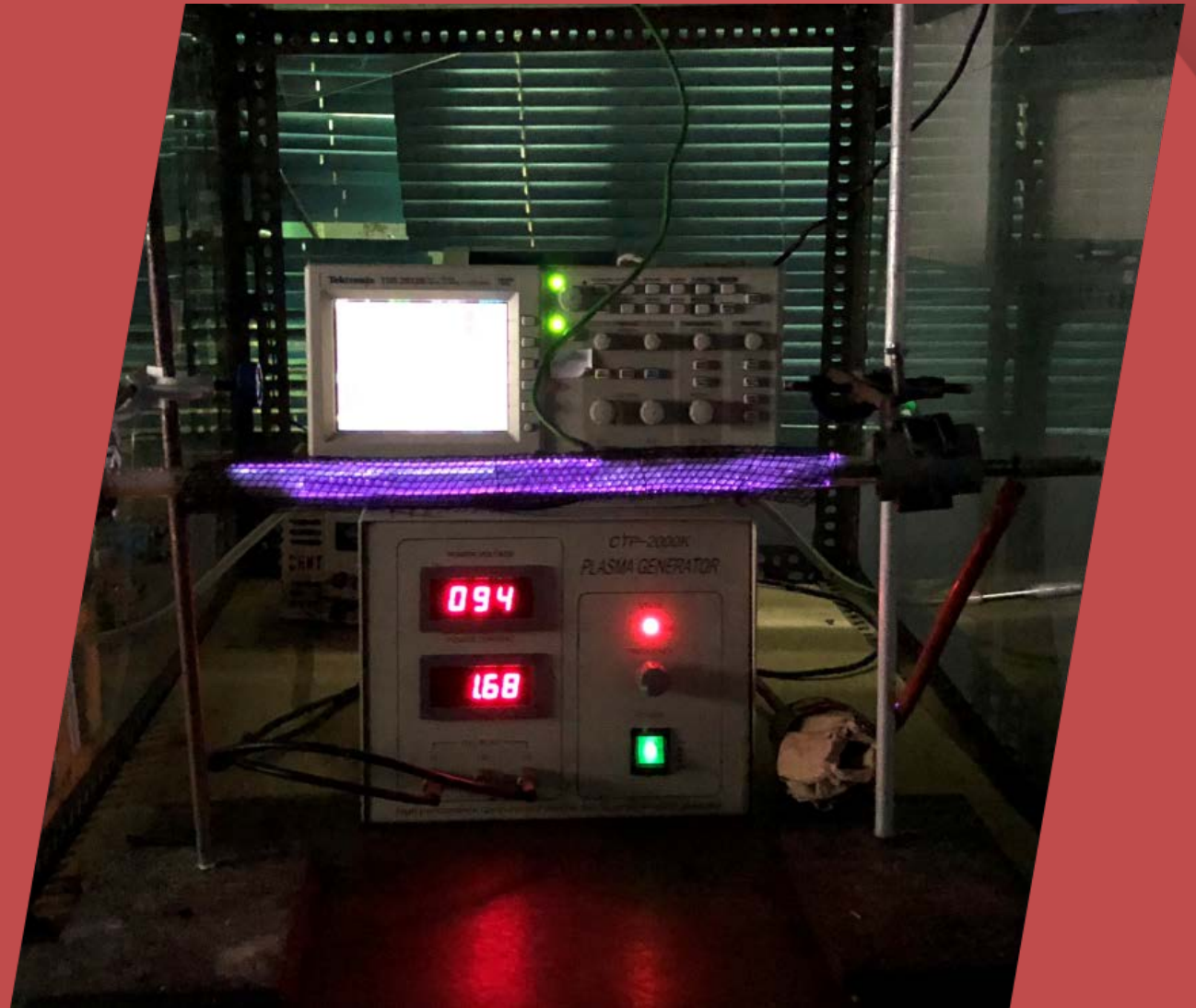


TGA results of 10%Ni/TiO<sub>2</sub> NR & 10%Ni-5%Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>/TiO<sub>2</sub> NR spent catalysts; (inset) carbon deposition after DBD plasma DRM experiment.:

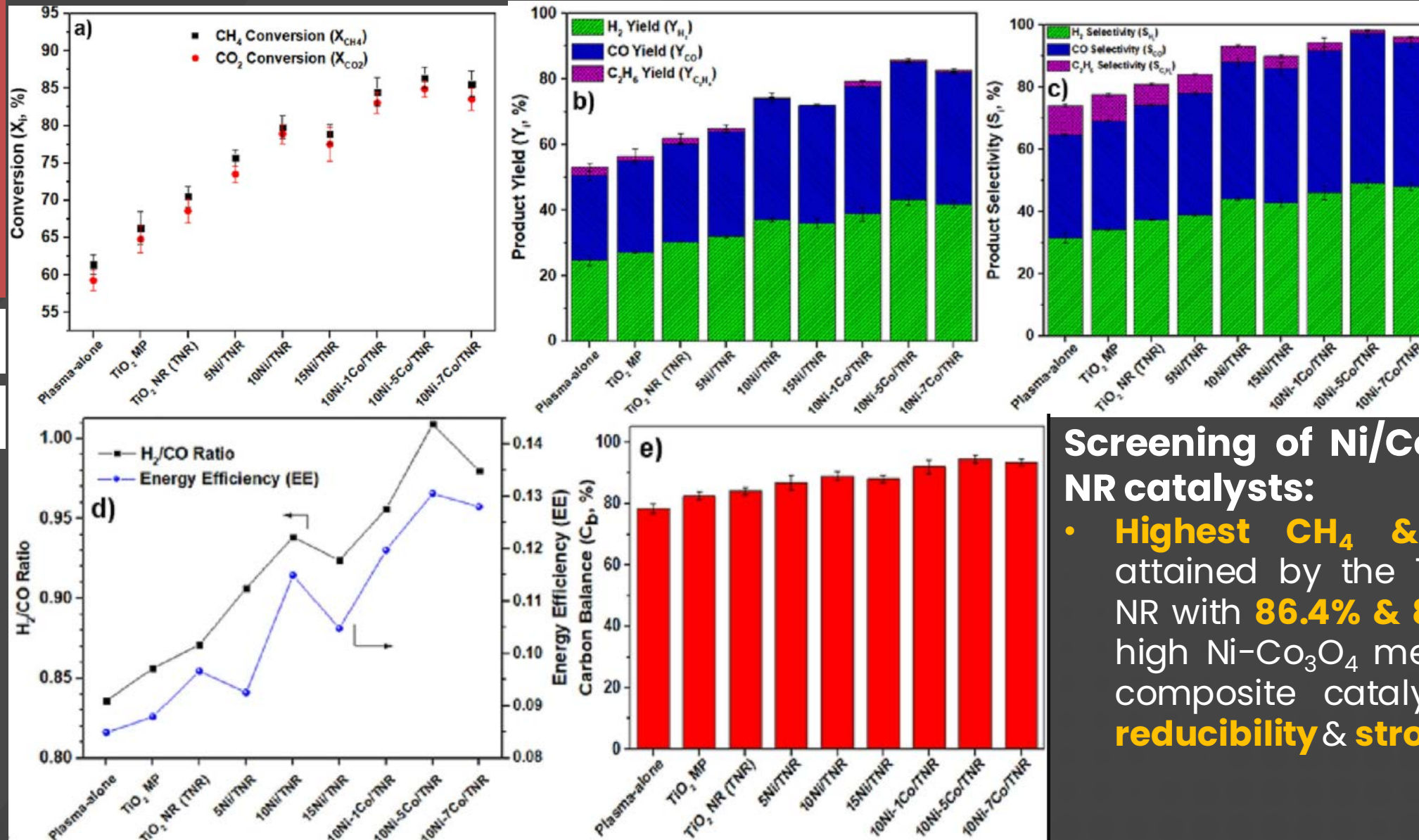
- **Higher amount** of total weight loss was recorded for the spent catalyst of 10%Ni/TiO<sub>2</sub> NR as compared to the 10%Ni-5%Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>/TiO<sub>2</sub> NR.
- **Lower carbon** deposition detected for spent 10%Ni-5%Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>/TiO<sub>2</sub> NR with **1.53 mg g<sup>-1</sup> catalyst** inferred the high resistance behavior towards carbon formation.



# Screening of Ni/Co supported $\text{TiO}_2$ NR/MP catalysts



# Results and discussion

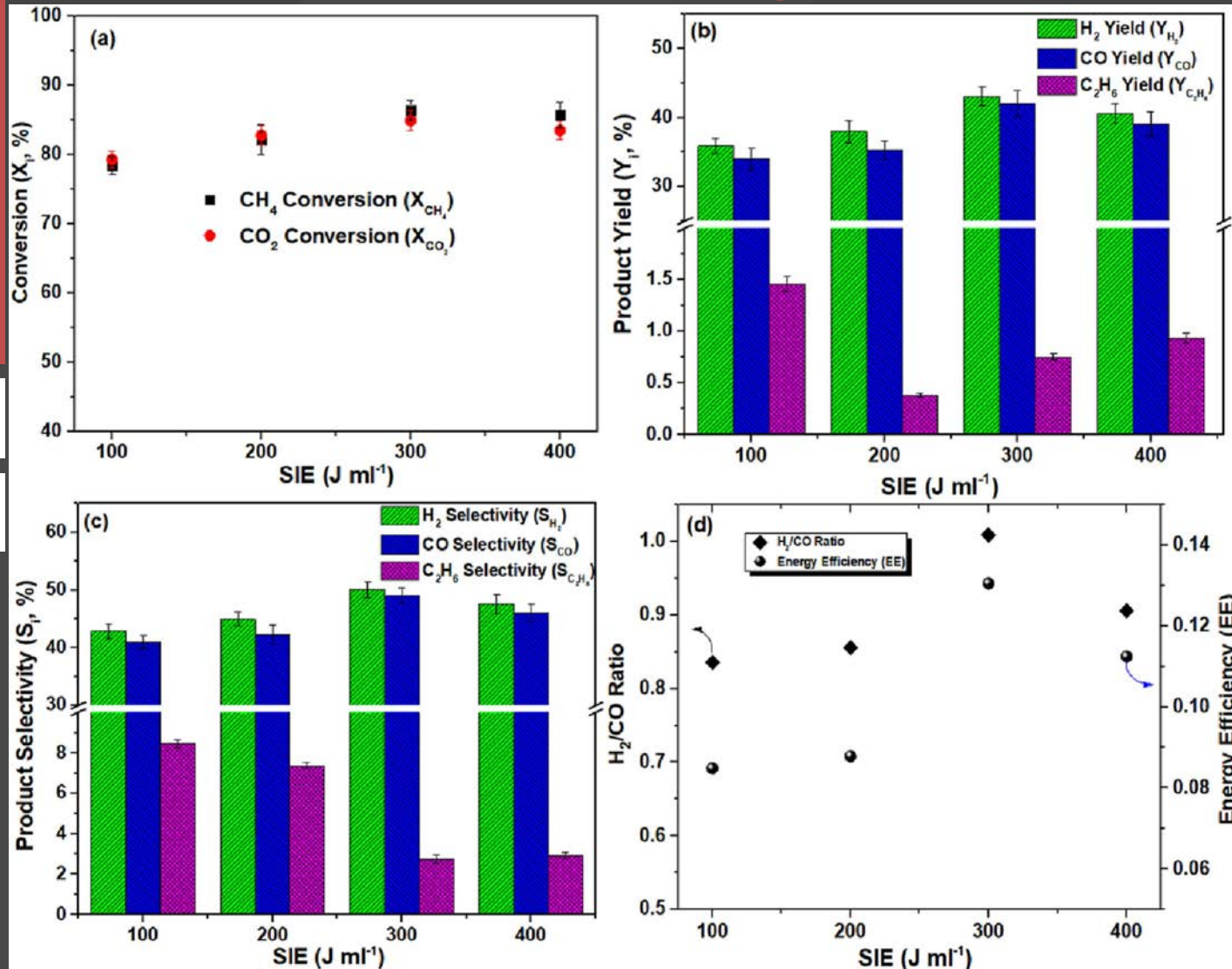


## Screening of Ni/Co supported $\text{TiO}_2$ NR catalysts:

- **Highest  $\text{CH}_4$  &  $\text{CO}_2$  conversion** attained by the 10%Ni-5% $\text{Co}_3\text{O}_4/\text{TiO}_2$  NR with **86.4% & 84.9%**, attributed to high Ni- $\text{Co}_3\text{O}_4$  metal dispersion over composite catalyst with **improved reducibility & strong basicity**.

# Results and discussion

## Effect of different operating parameters



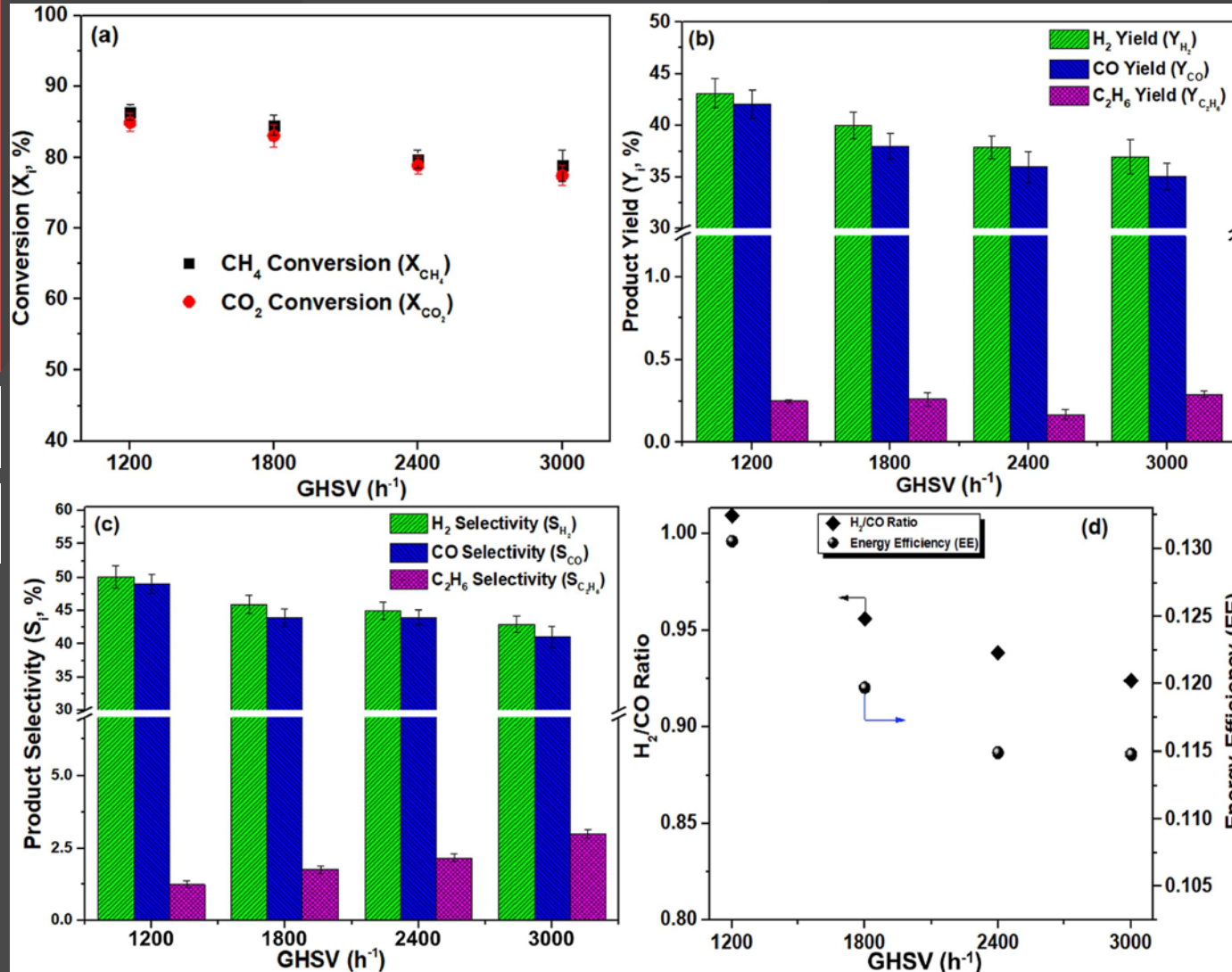
### Effect of specific input energy:

- Increasing SIE from  $100\ J\ ml^{-1}$  to  $300\ J\ ml^{-1}$  leads to higher conversion of reactants attributed to the increment of electric field & plasma induced **energetic electron density** in the plasma discharge zone.

- $X_{CH_4}$  is relatively higher than  $X_{CO_2}$  due to the **lesser energy** required for C - H bond cleavage & average threshold energy for bond partition of  $CH_4$  at **4.5 eV** & **10 eV**, respectively, compared to C - O bond cleavage & average threshold energy for  $CO_2$  of **5.5 eV** & **11.9 eV**

# Results and discussion

## Effect of different operating parameters

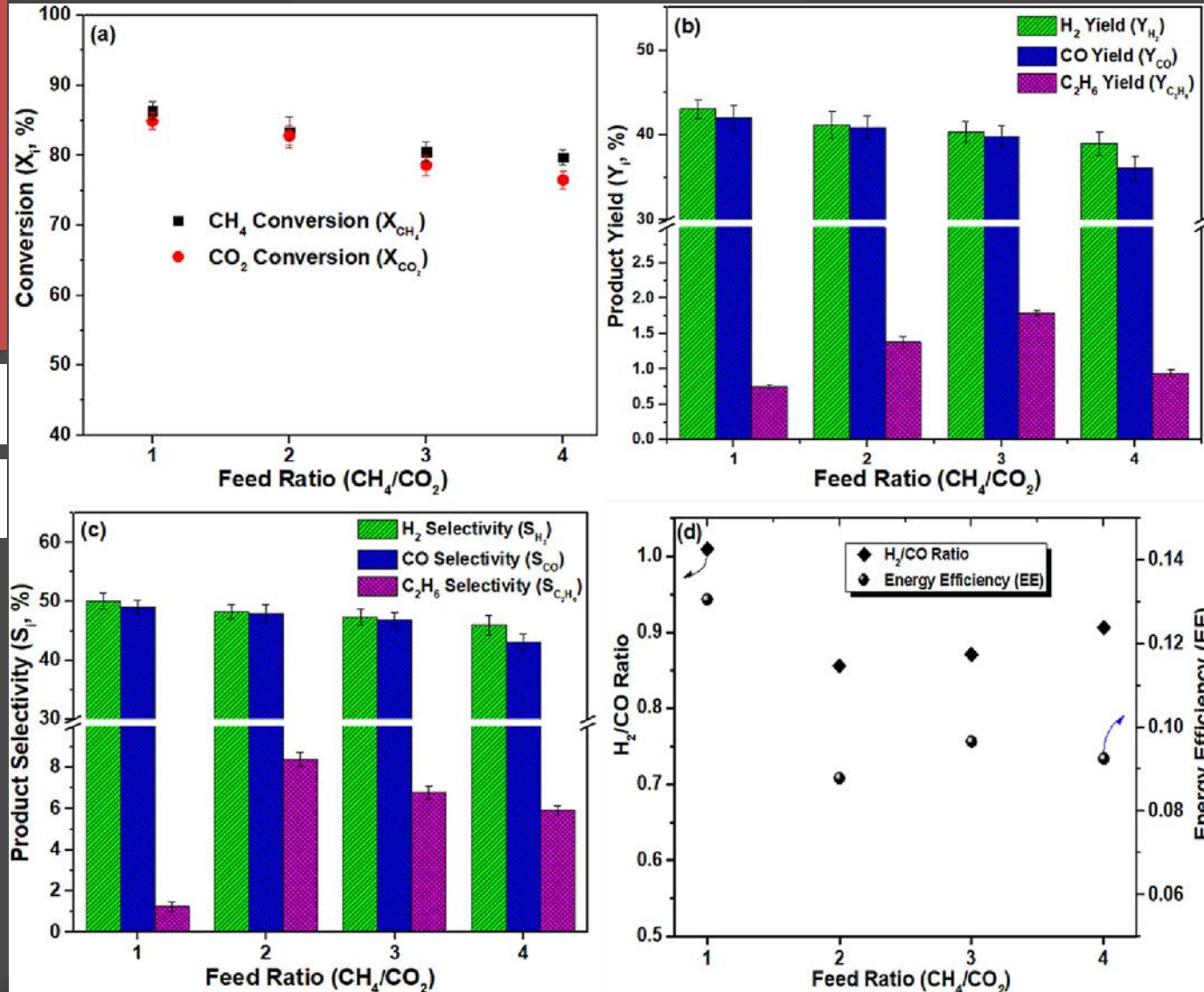


### Effect of GHSV:

- Drop in  $X_{CH_4}$  &  $X_{CO_2}$  as the GHSV increases indicates the effect of the **reduced contact time** inducing lesser interaction between the active species & reactants.
- Highest  $X_{CH_4}$  &  $X_{CO_2}$  attained at **lower** GHSV of  $1200 h^{-1}$  with 86.4% & 84.9%, respectively, with the **highest**  $H_2$  & CO yield obtained at **43.1%** & **42.0%**, respectively.
- $H_2/CO$  ratio near unity with the highest energy efficiency of **0.131 mmol  $kJ^{-1}$**  achieved at the **lower GHSV**.

# Results and discussion

## Effect of different operating parameters



### Effect of feed ratio:

- $X_{\text{CH}_4}$  &  $X_{\text{CO}_2}$  **decrease** as the feed ratio increase.
- Highest  $X_{\text{CO}_2}$  (85%) &  $X_{\text{CH}_4}$  (86.4%) is recorded at a feed ratio of **one**.
- Syngas ratio of **1.01** & **EE** of **0.13**  $\text{mmol kJ}^{-1}$  is observed the highest at a feed ratio of one.
- In summary the plasma DRM efficiency can be optimized by manipulating the  **$\text{CH}_4/\text{CO}_2$  ratio** in the feed stream.

# Results and discussion

## Comparison of catalytic performance

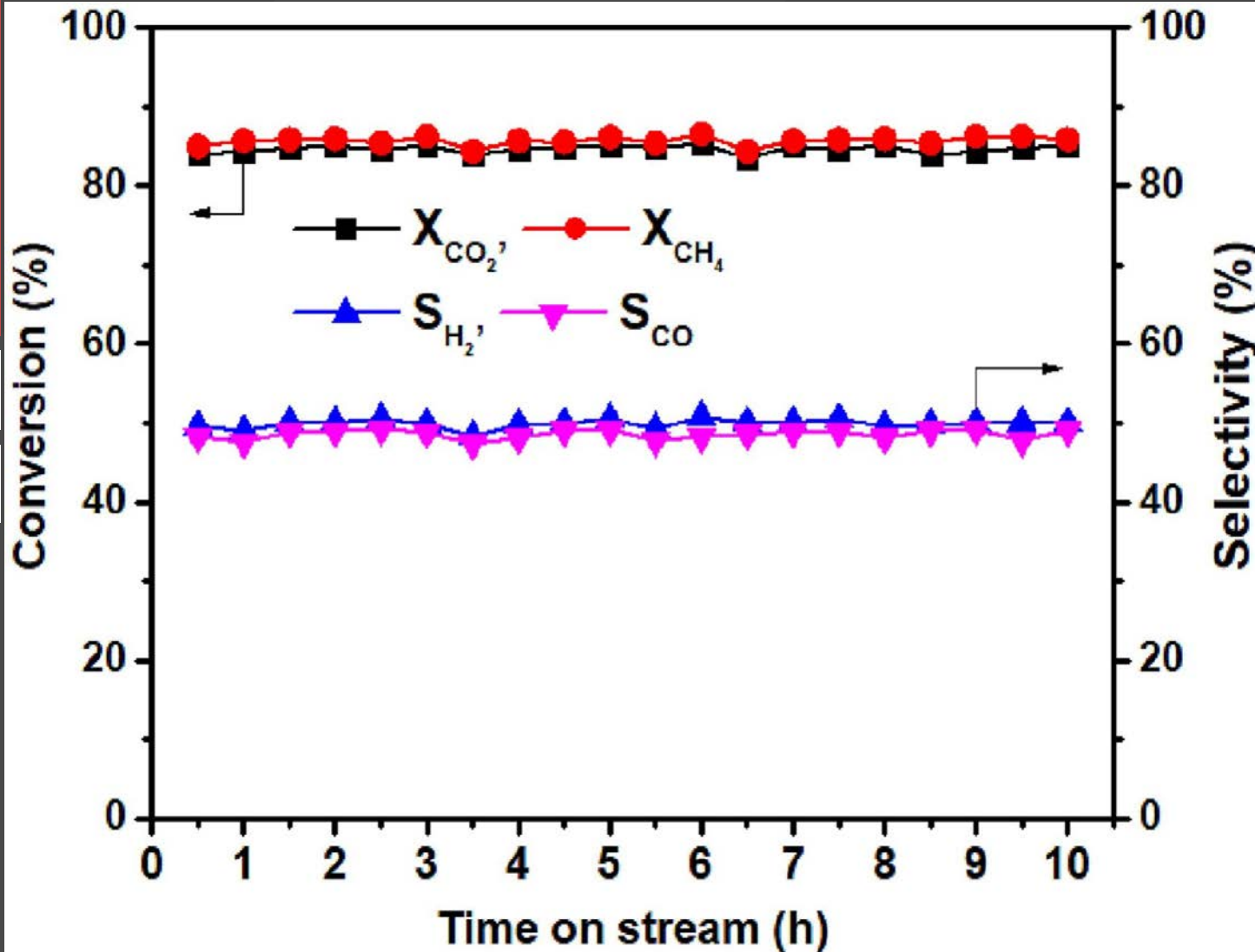
Catalysts	Loading (g)	Power (W)	Flow rate (ml min <sup>-1</sup> )	SIE = (J ml <sup>-1</sup> )	X <sub>CO2</sub> (%)	X <sub>CH4</sub> (%)	S <sub>CO</sub> (%)	S <sub>H2</sub> (%)	H <sub>2</sub> /CO ratio	EE (mmol kJ <sup>-1</sup> )
10%Ni-5%Co <sub>3</sub> O <sub>4</sub> /TiO <sub>2</sub> NR (This work)	0.3	100	20	300	85	86	49	50.1	1.01	0.131
10%Ni/Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub> -MgO (Khoja <i>et al.</i> , 2018)	0.5	100	20	300	73	74	48	47	0.98	0.117
Ni-Fe/SiO <sub>2</sub> (Zheng <i>et al.</i> , 2015a)	0.2	160	40	-	68.6	60.5	86.7	74.3	0.91	0.120
Ni-La <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub> /SiO <sub>2</sub> (Zheng <i>et al.</i> , 2015b)	-	160	50	-	56.8	66.8	83.1	72.9	-	0.144
15%Ni/TiO <sub>2</sub> (Ray <i>et al.</i> , 2019)	-	24	30	200	10	20	53	44	1.08	-
15Ni/Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub> (Ray <i>et al.</i> , 2019)	-	24	30	200	11	25	39	61	0.89	-
12%Cu-Ni/Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub> (Zhang <i>et al.</i> , 2010)	0.1	60	60	60	30	56	52	31	0.6	-
26%Ni/Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub> (Tu <i>et al.</i> , 2011)	1.8	97	50	166	30.2	56.4	52.4	31	0.59	-
15Ni/ZSM (Ray <i>et al.</i> , 2019)	-	24	30	200	11	18	49	41	1.02	-
-	Data not available									

**Comparison of 10%Ni-5%Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>/TiO<sub>2</sub> NR catalyst for DBD plasma-catalytic DRM with previous literature:**

- **Reactant conversion** in this study has significantly improved as compared to other catalyst packings cited from previous literature.
- Enhanced product selectivity & H<sub>2</sub>/CO **ratio unity** in this study can also be observed as compared to previous literature.
- **EE** of 10%Ni-5%Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>/TiO<sub>2</sub> NR catalyst is also recorded better & comparable with previous reports.

# Results and discussion

## Catalyst Stability Test

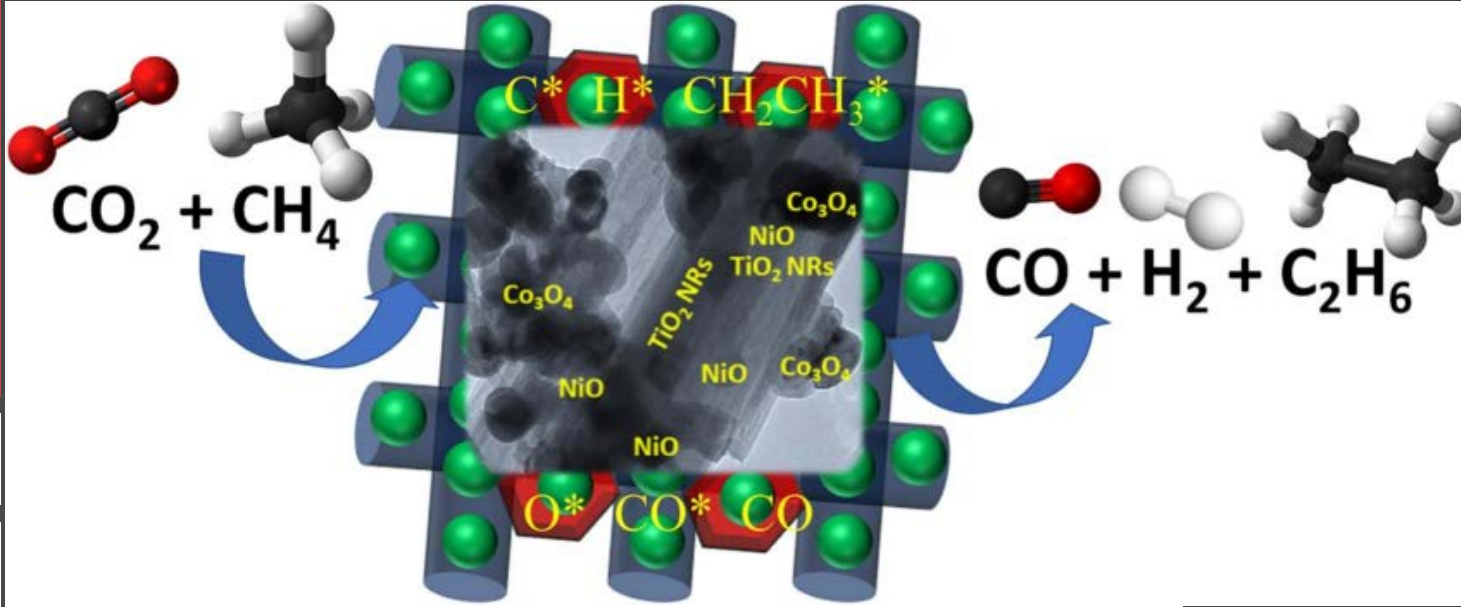


Stability test of 10%Ni-5%Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>/TiO<sub>2</sub> NR catalyst in 10 h time-on-stream:

- High catalytic stability was observed with **85% X<sub>CO<sub>2</sub></sub> & 85.9 X<sub>CH<sub>4</sub></sub>**.
- Selectivity of syngas remained constant at **~49% CO & ~50% H<sub>2</sub>**.
- Stability experiment of 10%Ni-5%Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>/TiO<sub>2</sub> NR in agreement with characterization outcomes of XPS & H<sub>2</sub>-TPR for the role of **reduced active metal & strong metal-support interaction**.

# Results and discussion

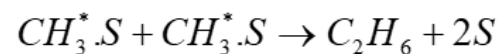
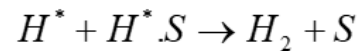
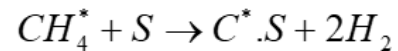
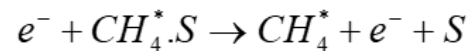
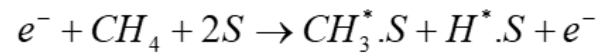
## Reaction mechanism



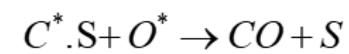
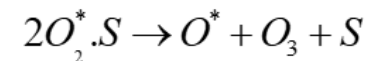
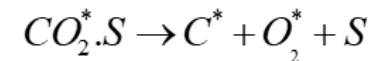
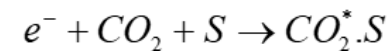
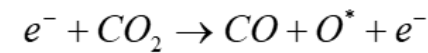
### Possible reactions on plasma-assisted catalyst surface for DRM:

- Input energy is provided by the highly oscillating charge particles (**electrons**) & **radicals** produced under plasma conditions.
- The CO\* and H\* radicals react with excited plasma-generated electrons to produce **syngas**.
- CH<sub>2</sub>\* and CH<sub>3</sub>\* radical species react with excited electrons under the presence of plasma & catalyst to higher hydrocarbons such as **C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>6</sub>**.

#### CH<sub>4</sub> reforming



#### CO<sub>2</sub> reforming

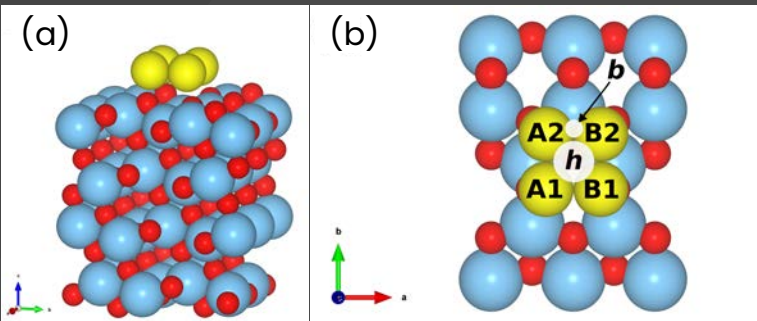


S – Surface active sites



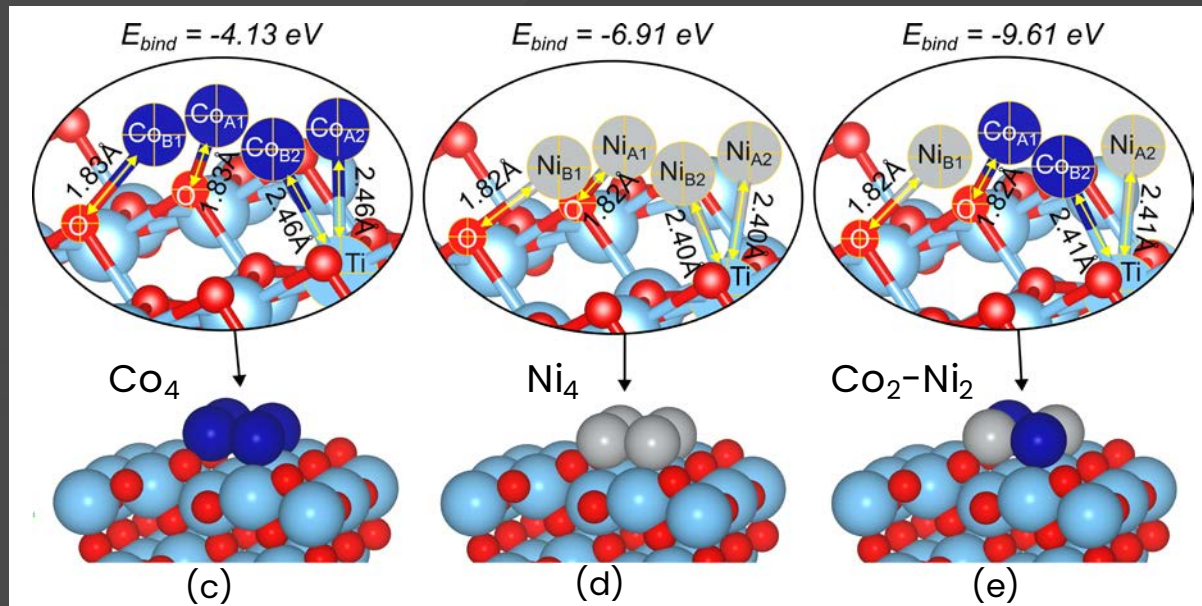
# Results and discussion

## H Adsorption & Desorption on (Ni<sub>4</sub>, Co<sub>4</sub>, Co<sub>2</sub>-Ni<sub>2</sub>) Supported on the Anatase-TiO<sub>2</sub> (101) Surface: DFT



### Structural stability in interaction between Co<sub>4</sub>, Ni<sub>4</sub>, and Co<sub>2</sub>-Ni<sub>2</sub> cluster on Anatase-TiO<sub>2</sub> surface.

- Initial configuration of metal cluster (MC) placement on a-TiO<sub>2</sub> surface illustrated in Figure (a) – side view and (b) – top view.
- Optimized geometries, binding energy, and bond lengths illustrated in Figure (c)–(e).

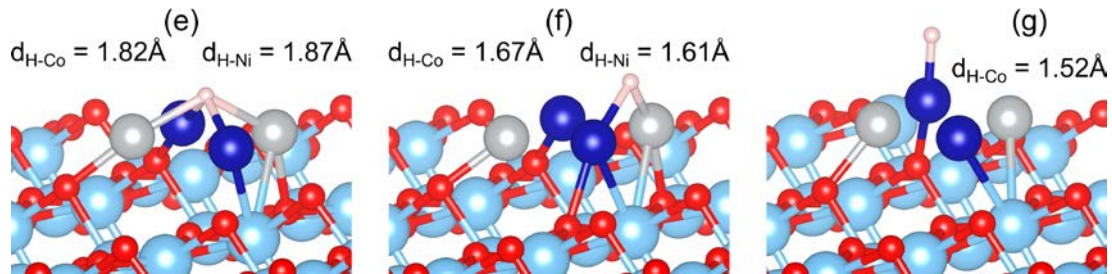
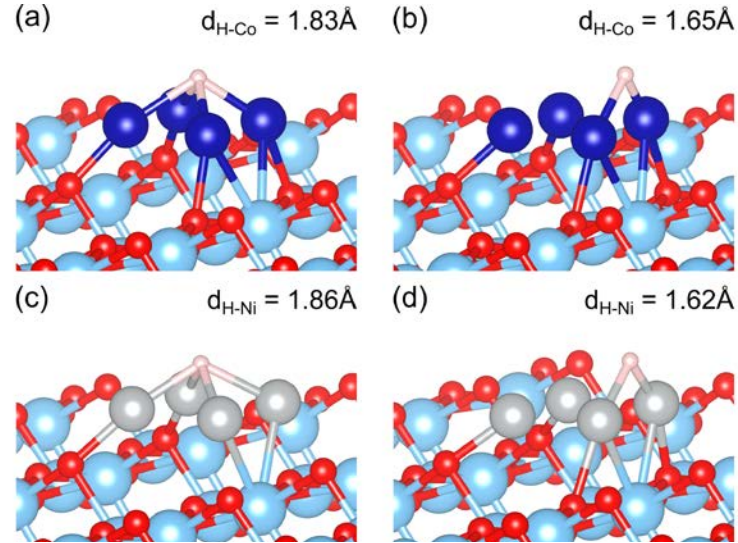


- Stable MC configuration: A1/B1 binds to surface oxygen, A2/B2 to surface Ti. (Consistent with Prior Metal Cluster Studies on Metal Oxides).
- MC stability: **Co<sub>2</sub>-Ni<sub>2</sub>/a-TiO<sub>2</sub>** exhibits **highest binding energy**. ( $E_{bind} = -9.61 \text{ eV}$ )
- Enhanced **Co<sub>2</sub>-Ni<sub>2</sub>** cluster stability suggests potential for **prolonged catalytic activity** through Co-Ni synergy.



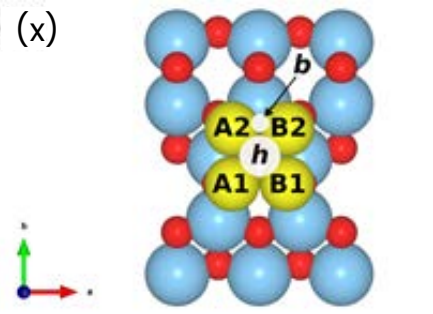
# Results and discussion

## H Adsorption & Desorption on (Ni<sub>4</sub>, Co<sub>4</sub>, Co<sub>2</sub>-Ni<sub>2</sub>) Supported on the Anatase-TiO<sub>2</sub> (101) Surface: DFT



### Single H atom adsorption and stability on MC/ $\alpha$ -TiO<sub>2</sub>

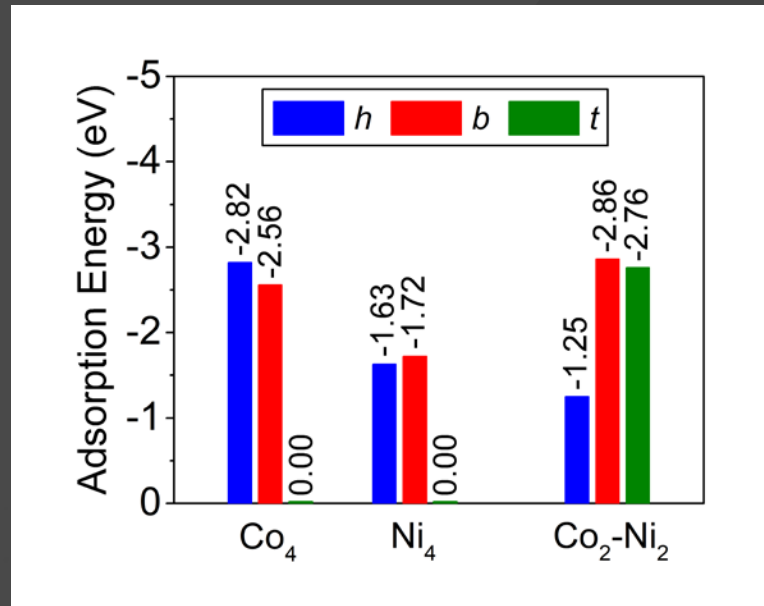
- Four H adsorption sites examined on MC/ $\alpha$ -TiO<sub>2</sub> surface: top sites of A1 and A2 (*t*), hollow sites (*h*), and bridge sites (*b*) – see Figure (x).
- Most stable adsorption site illustrated in Figure (a) – (g)
- **Co<sub>4</sub>/ $\alpha$ -TiO<sub>2</sub>**: H prefers *h* sites (Figure a) and *b* sites (Figure b).



- **Ni<sub>4</sub>/ $\alpha$ -TiO<sub>2</sub>**: H favors *h* sites (Figure c) and *b* sites (Figure d).
- **Co<sub>2</sub>-Ni<sub>2</sub>/ $\alpha$ -TiO<sub>2</sub>**: H prefers on *h* sites (Figure e), *b* sites (Figure f) and *t* sites (Figure g).

# Results and discussion

## H Adsorption & Desorption on (Ni<sub>4</sub>, Co<sub>4</sub>, Co<sub>2</sub>-Ni<sub>2</sub>) Supported on the Anatase-TiO<sub>2</sub> (101) Surface: DFT

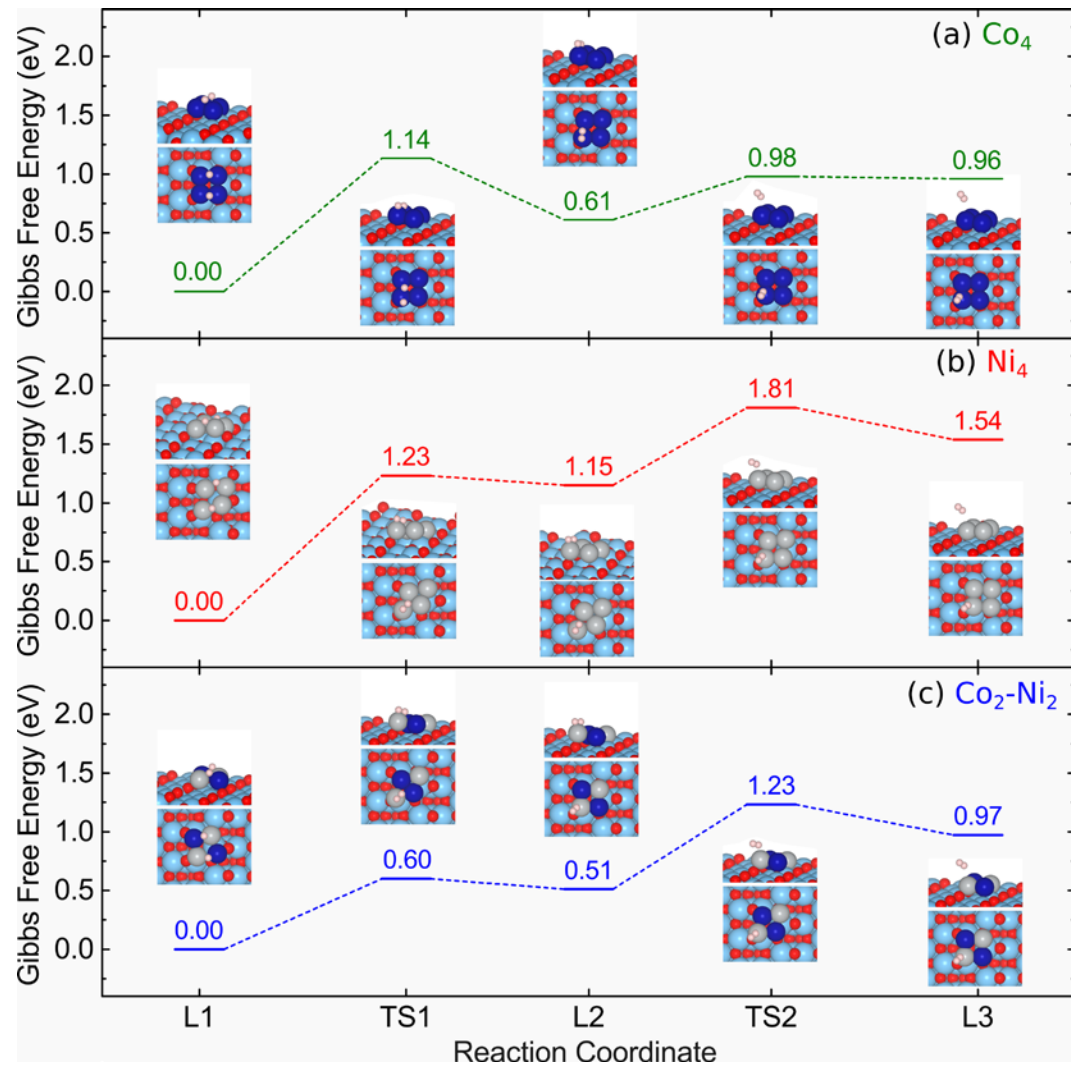


### Single H atom adsorption and stability on MC/a-TiO<sub>2</sub>

- Adsorption energy of H atom on Co<sub>4</sub>, Ni<sub>4</sub>, and Co<sub>2</sub>-Ni<sub>2</sub> supported on a-TiO<sub>2</sub> surface at preferable active sites (*h*, *b*, or *t*) – see figure.
- H atom **thermodynamically most stable** on Co<sub>2</sub>-Ni<sub>2</sub>/a-TiO<sub>2</sub> at the *b* Site (-2.86 eV).
- Co<sub>2</sub>-Ni<sub>2</sub>/a-TiO<sub>2</sub> catalyst offers **more active sites** for H atom adsorption (*h*, *b*, and *t* sites).

# Results and discussion

## H Adsorption & Desorption on (Ni<sub>4</sub>, Co<sub>4</sub>, Co<sub>2</sub>-Ni<sub>2</sub>) Supported on the Anatase-TiO<sub>2</sub> (101) Surface: DFT

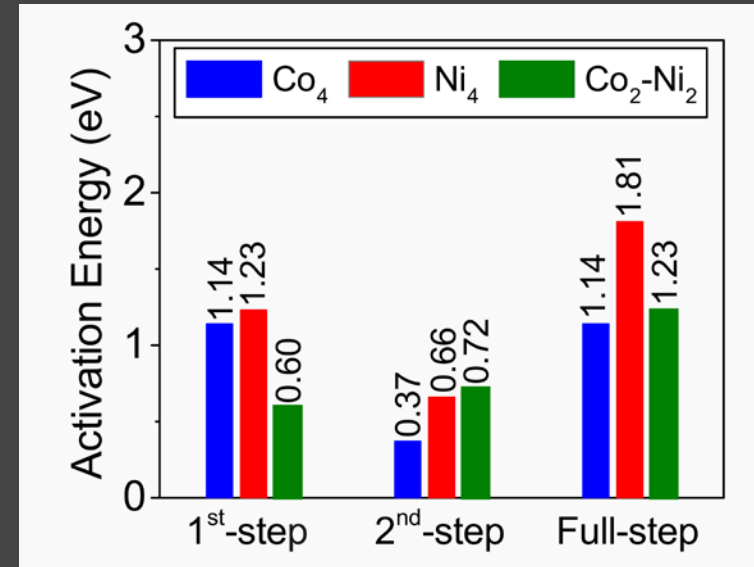
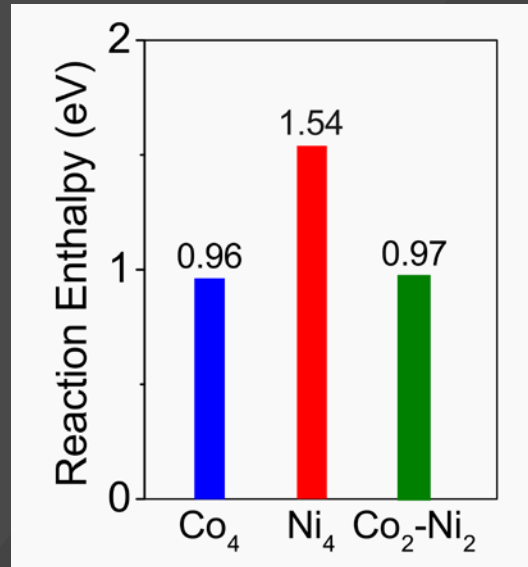


### Reaction pathway for the associative desorption of H<sub>2</sub> on MC/ $\alpha$ -TiO<sub>2</sub> catalysts :

- Proposed two-step H<sub>2</sub> desorption pathway reaction – see figure.
- Initial placement of two preabsorbed H atoms at adjacent bridge sites.
- **1<sup>st</sup>-step reaction** (L1-L2): These H atoms **diffuse** and form an H<sub>2</sub><sup>\*</sup> radical on surface.
- **2<sup>nd</sup>-step reaction** (L2-L3): These adsorbed H<sub>2</sub> undergoes **desorption**.

# Results and discussion

## H Adsorption & Desorption on ( $\text{Ni}_4$ , $\text{Co}_4$ , $\text{Co}_2\text{-Ni}_2$ ) Supported on the Anatase- $\text{TiO}_2$ (101) Surface: DFT



### Reaction pathway for the associative desorption of $\text{H}_2$ on MC/ $\alpha\text{-TiO}_2$ catalysts :

- Enthalpy of reaction is **endothermic** for all MC/ $\alpha\text{-TiO}_2$  – see figure (left).
- $E_a$  for 1<sup>st</sup>-step, 2<sup>nd</sup>-step, overall reaction is summarized – see figure (right)
- 1<sup>st</sup>-step reaction (L1-L2):  $\text{Co}_2\text{-Ni}_2/\alpha\text{-TiO}_2$  offering **lowest**  $E_a$  (0.60 eV).
- 2<sup>nd</sup>-step reaction (L2-L3):  $\text{Co}_2\text{-Ni}_2/\alpha\text{-TiO}_2$  exhibits **highest**  $E_a$  (0.72 eV)
- $\text{Co}_4/\alpha\text{-TiO}_2$  has the **lowest overall**  $E_a$  for associative  $\text{H}_2$  desorption. ( $E_a = 1.14$  eV)

# Results and discussion

## H Adsorption & Desorption on (Ni<sub>4</sub>, Co<sub>4</sub>, Co<sub>2</sub>-Ni<sub>2</sub>) Supported on the Anatase-TiO<sub>2</sub> (101) Surface: DFT

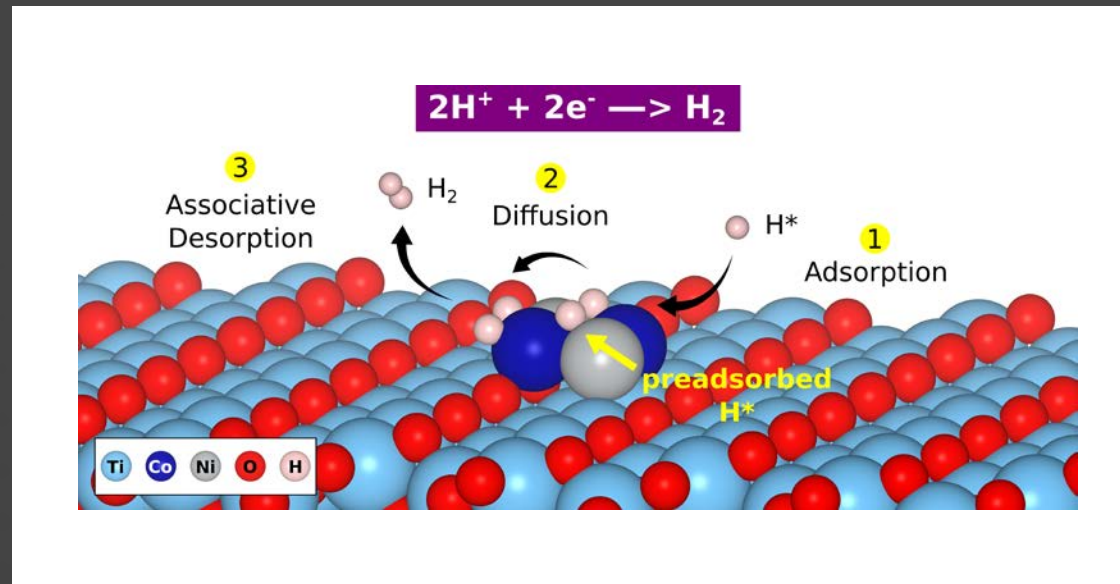
### Reaction pathway for the associative desorption of H<sub>2</sub> on MC/a-TiO<sub>2</sub> catalysts :

- However, Co<sub>2</sub>-Ni<sub>2</sub>/a-TiO<sub>2</sub> significantly enhances H<sub>2</sub> production activity:
  - 1) This enhancement is attributed to a minor 0.09 eV difference in E<sub>a</sub> between Co<sub>2</sub>-Ni<sub>2</sub>/a-TiO<sub>2</sub> and Co<sub>2</sub>/a-TiO<sub>2</sub>.
  - 2) Supported by improved stability between Co<sub>2</sub>-Ni<sub>2</sub> cluster and a-TiO<sub>2</sub> surface, prolonging catalytic activity.
- Co-Ni clusters synergistically enhance and extend catalytic activity in H<sub>2</sub> production

# Results and discussion

H Adsorption & Desorption on (Ni<sub>4</sub>, Co<sub>4</sub>, Co<sub>2</sub>-Ni<sub>2</sub>) Supported on the Anatase-TiO<sub>2</sub> (101) Surface: DFT

Proposed reaction mechanism of adsorption and associative desorption of H<sub>2</sub> on a Co<sub>2</sub>-Ni<sub>2</sub>/α-TiO<sub>2</sub> surface.



# Conclusions

- Ni-Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>/TiO<sub>2</sub> NR catalysts are successfully synthesized & investigated in the packed bed DBD non-thermal plasma-catalytic DRM reaction for syngas production.
- Catalytic screening for different metal loading confirms superior performance of 10%Ni-5%Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>/TiO<sub>2</sub> NR catalyst with the highest CH<sub>4</sub> & CO<sub>2</sub> conversion of 86.4% & 84.9%, H<sub>2</sub>/CO ratio unity, highest EE of 0.131 mmol kJ<sup>-1</sup> & 94.5% carbon balance.
- The enhancement in activity is ascribed to successful impregnation of NiO nanoparticles and Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> nanocubes on TiO<sub>2</sub> nanorods with homogeneous dispersion for the 10%Ni-5%Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>/TiO<sub>2</sub> NR composite catalyst as evident in XRD and HRTEM.
- High reducibility, excellent basicity and strong metal-support interaction promote progressive adsorption of CO<sub>2</sub> and other plasma-generating energetic species and boost CO<sub>2</sub> conversion in DRM reaction.
- The optimum reaction condition has been found with the highest conversion and product yield at SIE 300 J ml<sup>-1</sup>, GHSV 1200 h<sup>-1</sup> and CH<sub>4</sub>/CO<sub>2</sub> feed ratio of 1.
- DFT analysis shows that the introduction of Co & Ni supported on the α-TiO<sub>2</sub> catalyst have a positive impact on hydrogen production activity & migration on the surface.





# Acknowledgements

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- 2) UTM Fundamental Research Grant, vot number 21H28
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- 4) CAER Laboratory, University of Kentucky for providing VASP software and Lipscomb High Performance Computing Cluster

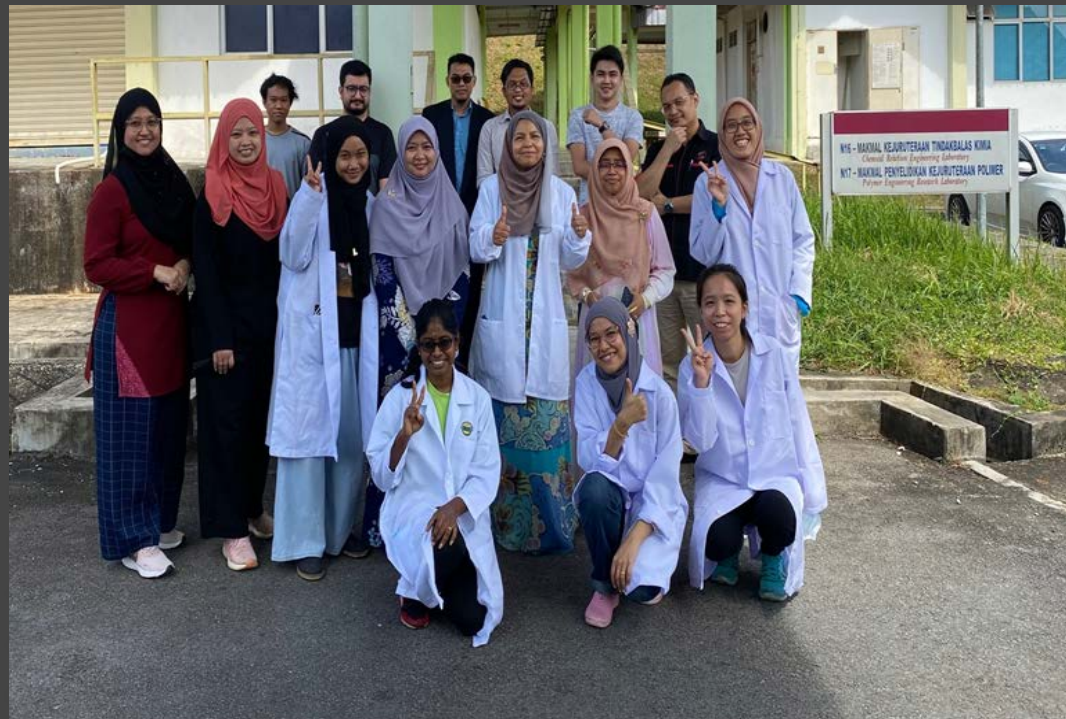
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