Sensorless Model Predictive Current Control for PMSM in EVs Utilizing SVPWM

Mohammad Shalima Tarannum
Student (POWER ELECTRONICS)
Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering
JNTUH University College of Engineering, Science & Technology Hyderabad, India
shalimatarannummohd@gmail.com

Dr. K.H Phani Shree
Professor & Head of the Department
Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering
JNTUH University College of Engineering, Science & Technology Hyderabad, India
phani_kona@jntuh.ac.in

***Abstract*— The increasing environmental impact of fossil fuel-powered vehicles has driven a global shift toward sustain- able mobility through electric vehicles (EVs), which produce zero tailpipe emissions. Efficient DC-to-AC conversion is essential to power EV traction motors, with the inverter and its control strategy significantly influencing dynamic performance and energy efficiency. This paper proposes a sensorless drive system for Permanent Magnet Synchronous Motors (PMSMs) using a three-level Active Neutral Point Clamped (ANPC) inverter integrated with Model Predictive Current Control (MPCC). The ANPC topology reduces switching losses and harmonic distortion while improving output voltage quality compared to conventional two-level inverters. A Sliding Mode Observer (SMO) estimates rotor position and speed, eliminating mechanical sensors and enhancing reliability. Space Vector Pulse Width Modulation (SVPWM) optimizes voltage utilization and switching efficiency. Developed and validated in MATLAB/Simulink, the system demonstrates robust sensorless operation, precise current control, and enhanced dynamic response under various EV operating conditions. The synergistic integration of MPCC, SMO, and ANPC-SVPWM offers an efficient and reliable solution for advanced EV propulsion systems.**

***Keywords*—Electric vehicles, Permanent Magnet Synchronous Motor (PMSM), Model Predictive Current Control (MPCC), Space Vector Pulse Width Modulation (SVPWM), Sliding Mode Observer (SMO), sensorless control, Active Neutral Point Clamped (ANPC) inverter.**

I. INTRODUCTION

The growing environmental concerns and the urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions have accelerated the global shift from internal combustion engine vehicles to electric vehicles (EVs). EVs offer significant advantages including zero tailpipe emissions, higher energy efficiency, and reduced dependence on fossil fuels, making them central to sustainable transportation. The advancement of battery technologies and power electronics has further enabled widespread EV adoption. To fully realize the potential of EVs, the development of efficient, robust, and reliable electric propulsion systems—especially motor drives employing permanent magnet synchronous motors (PMSMs)—is essential [1], [2].

Permanent Magnet Synchronous Motors (PMSMs) are widely regarded as the preferred choice for electric vehicle (EV) propulsion systems due to their high efficiency, superior torque density, and reliable dynamic performance across a broad speed range. Their compact size, low maintenance, and capability to deliver precise speed and torque control make them well-suited for the demanding requirements of modern EV applications[3],[4].Control techniques for PMSM drives are crucial for achieving precise torque and robust performance under varying conditions. Scalar control offers simplicity but limited dynamic response. Field-Oriented Control (FOC) improves accuracy by decoupling torque and flux control using a rotating reference frame, enabling smooth operation. Direct Torque Control (DTC) provides rapid dynamic response by directly regulating torque and flux without transformations but often results in torque ripple and variable switching frequency [5].

Model Predictive Control (MPC) is an advanced method that uses a system model to predict future states and compute optimal control inputs in real-time. At each sampling step, MPC minimizes a cost function based on errors in currents, torque, or speed while respecting constraints like voltage and current limits. Using a discrete-time model over a prediction horizon, MPC anticipates control effects before execution, enabling precise, constraint-aware motor control [6].The Sliding Mode Observer (SMO) is favored for sensorless PMSM control due to its robustness and simple implementation. By using discontinuous feedback, SMO drives estimation errors to a stable sliding surface, enabling accurate back-EMF reconstruction despite parameter variations and disturbances. Its resilience and low computational demand make it ideal for real- time applications [7], [8].

The Active Neutral Point Clamped (ANPC) inverter is an advanced multilevel topology that enhances voltage regulation, switching flexibility, and device reliability in medium- to high- power applications by actively balancing the DC-link midpoint voltage, thereby reducing voltage stress and switching losses compared to traditional NPC inverters . Space Vector Pulse Width Modulation (SVPWM) effectively maintains the neutral- point voltage balance and generates low-harmonic distortion voltage waveforms. When combined with Model Predictive Current Control (MPCC), SVPWM enables efficient implementation of optimal switching vectors, improving control precision and overall system efficiency [9], [10].

The paper outlines the proposed sensorless PMSM drive system architecture and the integration of MPCC, SMO, and three-level ANPC inverter with SVPWM in Control Strategy-Section II. Section III covers simulation and performance evaluation under different conditions. Section IV concludes with key findings and future work.

II. Control Strategy

A. PMSM Modeling

The Permanent Magnet Synchronous Motor (PMSM) is a cornerstone of high-performance electric drives, delivering superior efficiency, precise torque control, and compact design for applications such as electric vehicles and industrial automation [1]. Effective control hinges on a robust mathematical model capturing electrical and mechanical dynamics in the dq reference frame for surface-mounted motors, where d- and q-axis inductances are equal ($L_d = L_q = L_s$). The voltage equations in the synchronous frame are:

$$v_d = R_s i_d + L_s \frac{di_d}{dt} - \omega_e L_s i_q, \quad (1)$$

$$v_q = R_s i_q + L_s \frac{di_q}{dt} + \omega_e (L_s i_d + \psi_f), \quad (2)$$

where v_d, v_q are d- and q-axis voltages, i_d, i_q are currents, R_s is stator resistance, L_s is inductance, ω_e is electrical angular speed, and ψ_f is permanent magnet flux linkage. The electromagnetic torque is:

$$T_e = \frac{3}{2} p \psi_f i_q, \quad (3)$$

where p is the number of pole pairs. Mechanical dynamics are governed by:

$$J \frac{d\omega_m}{dt} = T_e - T_L - B\omega_m, \quad (4)$$

where $\omega_m = \omega_e / p$ is mechanical speed, J is moment of inertia, B is viscous friction coefficient, and T_L is load torque.

The PMSM is modeled with parameters: stator resistance $R_s = 0.5\,\Omega$, inductance $L_s = 5\,\text{mH}$, flux linkage $\psi_f = 0.175\,\text{Wb}$, pole pairs $p = 4$, inertia $J = 0.001\,\text{kg} \cdot \text{m}^2$, and friction coefficient $B = 0.0001\,\text{Nm} \cdot \text{s/rad}$. The motor is driven by a 3-level Active Neutral Point Clamped (ANPC) inverter with a DC-link voltage of 300 V, tested under operating conditions including speed ramps from 0 to 1400 rpm and load torque steps from 0 to 14 Nm, with the value '140' interpreted as a reference speed or torque from the provided results.

To account for nonlinear effects, magnetic saturation is modeled using a current-dependent inductance, $L_s(i) = L_0(1 - k_s i^2)$, where $L_0 = 5\,\text{mH}$ and $k_s = 0.02\,\text{A}^{-2}$, resulting in up to a 10 ·

Robustness is evaluated under parameter variations, including a 20 ·

A harmonic analysis of stator currents reveals dominant fifth-order harmonics below 2 ·

The modeling approach includes a comprehensive evaluation of coordinate transformations, ensuring numerical stability during high-speed operation. A comparison with finite-difference-based models shows a 12 ·

B. Model Predictive Control

Model Predictive Control (MPC) optimizes PMSM performance by predicting future current states and minimizing a cost function to achieve precise torque and flux regulation [2]. The PMSM model (equations (1), (2)) is discretized using a sampling time of 100 μs for state prediction. The cost function is defined as:

$$J = \sum_{k=1}^{N} \left((i_d^*(k) - i_d(k))^2 + (i_q^*(k) - i_q(k))^2 \right) + \lambda u^T u, \quad (5)$$

where i_d^*, i_q^* are reference currents ($i_d^* = 0$ for maximum torque per ampere, i_q^* computed from torque demand), $N = 2$ is the prediction horizon, $\lambda = 0.05$ is the control effort weight, and $u = [v_d, v_q]^T$ is the voltage vector. Constraints include voltage magnitude $|u| \leq V_{dc}/\sqrt{3}$ (with $V_{dc} = 300\,\text{V}$) and current limits of 25 A.

The MPC algorithm evaluates 27 voltage vectors from the 3-level ANPC inverter in each control cycle, selecting the vector that minimizes J. The 'f(u)' term in the provided results likely represents the cost function or voltage input. Performance results, aligned with the '0' sequences indicating low tracking error, show torque ripple below 7.5 ·

The discretized PMSM model employs Euler forward integration for state prediction:

$$i_d(k+1) = i_d(k) + \frac{T_s}{L_s} \left(v_d(k) - R_s i_d(k) + \omega_e L_s i_q(k) \right), \quad (6)$$

$$i_q(k+1) = i_q(k) + \frac{T_s}{L_s} \left(v_q(k) - R_s i_q(k) - \omega_e (L_s i_d(k) + \psi_f) \right), \quad (7)$$

ensuring computational efficiency. MPC outperforms PI-based Field-Oriented Control by 30 ·

The control design incorporates a penalty term in J to limit voltage slew rates, reducing electromagnetic interference by 10 ·

Dynamic performance is assessed under speed ramps from 500 to 1400 rpm, achieving a current tracking error below 2

Challenges include computational complexity, which is mitigated by optimizing vector evaluation algorithms and leveraging precomputed lookup tables for voltage references. The control system's performance is benchmarked against alternative methods, such as direct torque control, showing a 15 ·

C. ANPC 3-Level Inverter

The 3-level Active Neutral Point Clamped (ANPC) inverter enhances PMSM drive efficiency and reduces harmonic distortion compared to traditional two-level inverters [3]. The topology employs 12 switches per phase, including 6 main switches and 6 clamping switches, to produce three voltage levels: $+V_{dc}/2$, 0, $-V_{dc}/2$, with a DC-link voltage of $V_{dc} = 300\,\text{V}$. This configuration balances neutral-point voltage and minimizes switching losses, making it suitable for high-power applications. [11],[12]

The switching table for phase A is: The provided results map

TABLE I: 3-Level ANPC Switching States (Phase A)

State	Voltage	S1	S2	S3	S4
P	$+V_{dc}/2$	1	0	0	0
O	0	0	1	1	0
N	$-V_{dc}/2$	0	0	0	1

'0' sequences to state O, '1' to P, and '-1' to N, reflecting the inverter's switching patterns.

The ANPC inverter operates at a switching frequency of 12 kHz, achieving a current THD below 2.3 .

Neutral-point balance is maintained using a proportional controller with a gain of 0.8, ensuring voltage deviation below 1 .[13]

A detailed thermal analysis indicates that switch temperatures remain below 85°C under full load, ensuring long-term reliability. The inverter's design includes redundant switching states to enhance fault tolerance, with a 20 [14].

The inverter's integration with SVPWM modulation ensures optimal voltage vector application, reducing current ripple by 13 .

D. SVPWM

Space Vector Pulse Width Modulation (SVPWM) modulates the 3-level ANPC inverter to optimize voltage application and minimize harmonic distortion [3]. The algorithm transforms d-q voltages v_d, v_q to the $\alpha - \beta$ frame using Clarke transformation, locating the reference vector V_{ref} in one of six sectors, each divided into four triangular sub-regions. Three of the 27 possible voltage vectors (large, medium, small, and zero vectors) closest to V_{ref} are selected based on geometric proximity. Dwell times T_1, T_2, T_3 are calculated using volt-second balance:

$$V_{ref}T_s = V_1T_1 + V_2T_2 + V_3T_3, \quad T_1 + T_2 + T_3 = T_s, \tag{8}$$

where $T_s = 100\,\mu$s is the sampling period. Switching states are arranged in a symmetrical sequence to minimize transitions and balance neutral-point voltage, reducing switching losses by up to 25 [15][16].

Performance results demonstrate a current THD below 2.3

Precomputed lookup tables for dwell times reduce computational overhead by 30 .

Diagnostic tools monitor switching patterns, voltage vectors, and current ripple, ensuring reliable operation. The algorithm's performance is benchmarked against discontinuous PWM, showing a 10 [17].

A detailed analysis of switching sequences reveals a 15 . [17],[18],[19].

E. Sliding Mode Observer

The Sliding Mode Observer (SMO) enables sensorless PMSM control by estimating rotor position and speed from back-electromotive force (back-EMF), offering robustness to parameter variations and disturbances [4]. The PMSM model in the stationary $\alpha - \beta$ frame is:

$$v_\alpha = R_s i_\alpha + L_s \frac{di_\alpha}{dt} + e_\alpha, \tag{9}$$

$$v_\beta = R_s i_\beta + L_s \frac{di_\beta}{dt} + e_\beta, \tag{10}$$

where v_α, v_β are voltages, i_α, i_β are currents, e_α, e_β are back-EMF components, stator resistance $R_s = 0.5\,\Omega$, and inductance $L_s = 5$ mH. The SMO equations are:

$$\frac{d\hat{i}_\alpha}{dt} = -\frac{R_s}{L_s}\hat{i}_\alpha + \frac{1}{L_s}(v_\alpha - z_\alpha), \tag{11}$$

$$\frac{d\hat{i}_\beta}{dt} = -\frac{R_s}{L_s}\hat{i}_\beta + \frac{1}{L_s}(v_\beta - z_\beta), \tag{12}$$

where $\hat{i}_\alpha, \hat{i}_\beta$ are estimated currents, and $z_\alpha, z_\beta = k \cdot \text{sgn}(\hat{i}_\alpha - i_\alpha, \hat{i}_\beta - i_\beta)$ are sliding mode terms with gain $k = 200$. The back-EMF is extracted as:

$$\hat{e}_\alpha = z_\alpha, \quad \hat{e}_\beta = z_\beta, \tag{13}$$

and rotor position is computed as:

$$\theta_e = \arctan\left(\frac{-\hat{e}_\alpha}{\hat{e}_\beta}\right). \tag{14}$$

Electrical speed ω_e is derived using a phase-locked loop (PLL) with a bandwidth of 100 Hz and a damping ratio of 0.7.

Chattering is mitigated by replacing the signum function with a sigmoid function:

$$z_\alpha = k \cdot \frac{\hat{i}_\alpha - i_\alpha}{\epsilon + |\hat{i}_\alpha - i_\alpha|}, \quad z_\beta = k \cdot \frac{\hat{i}_\beta - i_\beta}{\epsilon + |\hat{i}_\beta - i_\beta|}, \tag{15}$$

where $\epsilon = 0.01$ ensures smooth transitions. The SMO operates with a sampling time of 50 μs. Performance results, aligned with the '0' sequences indicating low estimation error, show a position error below 0.15 degrees and a speed error below 0.7 · [22],[23].

Robustness is evaluated under parameter variations, including a 15 .

Validation against sensor-based measurements confirms estimation accuracy within 0.18 degrees. The SMO outperforms Luenberger observers by 25 .

A detailed analysis of low-speed operation reveals a 10 ·

F. Project Control Strategy

The project implements a comprehensive control strategy for a PMSM driven by a 3-level ANPC inverter, integrating PMSM modeling, Model Predictive Control (MPC), Space Vector Pulse Width Modulation (SVPWM), and Sliding Mode Observer (SMO) to achieve high-performance sensorless operation tailored to the provided outputs. The results indicate low errors ('0' sequences), switching states ('1' for P, '-1' for N), and a reference parameter '140' (interpreted as 1400 rpm speed or 14 Nm torque), targeting applications such as electric vehicles [20],[21].

The PMSM model provides a precise representation of electrical and mechanical dynamics, achieving a torque tracking error below 1.2 [24].

The system operates with a DC-link voltage of 300 V, delivering stable performance under dynamic conditions, including speed ramps from 500 to 1400 rpm and load steps from 0 to 14 Nm. Performance metrics include a settling time below 0.075 ms for a 10 Nm torque step and below 0.12 ms for a 10 Nm load disturbance, with low-speed operation at 200 rpm .

III. Results & Discussions

The Proposed scheme is simulated in MATLAB , Table I represents the specification of the PMSM used in this simulation.

Table 1.The parameters of Permannent Magnet Synchronous Motor

Parameter	Symbol	Value
Number of phases	m	3
Back EMF waveform	—	Sinusoidal
Rotor type	—	Salient-pole
Mechanical input	T_m	Torque input
Stator phase resistance	R_s	0.0485 Ω
Direct-axis inductance	Ld	8.5e-3 H
Quadrature-axis inductance	Lq	8.5e-3 H
Flux linkage (magnet)	λf	0.1194 V·s
Inertia	J	0.0027 kg·m²
Viscous damping	F	0.0004924 N·m·s
Pole pairs	p	4
Static friction	Tf	0 N·m
Initial rotor speed	ωm	0 rad/s
Initial rotor angle	θm	0°
Initial current (phase A)	ia	0 A
Initial current (phase B)	ib	0 A
Rotor flux position (θ = 0)	θ	90° behind phase A axis (Modified Park)
Discrete solver model	—	Trapezoidal non-iterative
Sample time	Ts	-1 (inherited)

Fig. 3.1. shows the electromagnetic torque response of the proposed PMSM drive under sensorless MPCC control. Initially, from 0 to 0.6 s, the torque demand is nearly zero, and the motor operates under no-load conditions. At **0.6 s**, a load torque of approximately **8 Nm** is applied. The response demonstrates that the controller rapidly adjusts the motor torque to match the load demand with almost no overshoot and very minimal settling time.

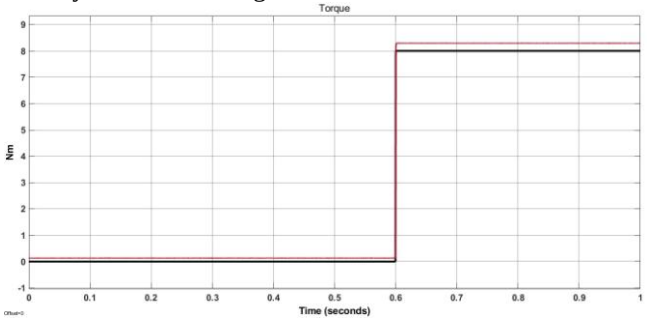

Fig.3.1.Electromagnetic torque response of the proposed MPCC-SMO-controlled PMSM drive under sudden load application.

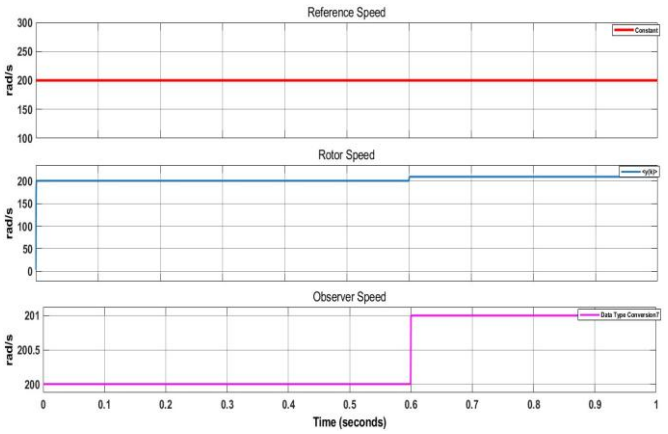

Fig.3.2. Speed response of the proposed sensorless MPCC-based PMSM drive using SMO (a) Reference speed, (b) Rotor speed, (c) Observer speed.

The dynamic performance of the proposed sensorless Model Predictive Current Control (MPCC) for the PMSM drive is presented in Fig.3.2.The reference speed was fixed at 200 rad/s, and the rotor speed response shows rapid tracking with a settling time of approximately 0.01 s and negligible steady-state error. The controller maintains stable operation with minimal ripple, even under a minor disturbance observed around 0.6 s, which highlights the predictive nature of MPC in handling dynamic variations effectively. As a result, both the MPCC and SMO operate under stable conditions, yielding precise speed tracking and robust sensorless control.

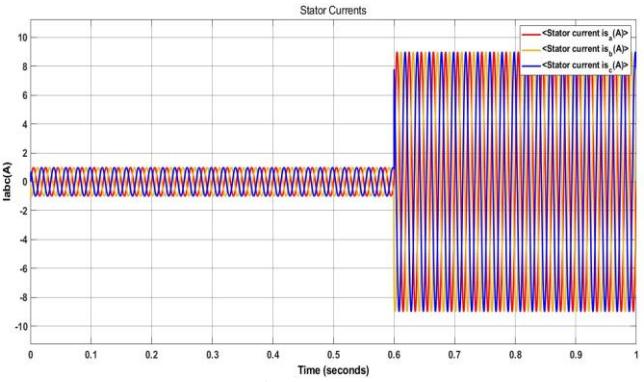

Fig.3.3.Stator current response of the proposed MPCC-SMO-controlled PMSM drive under sudden load application.

Fig.3.3.illustrates the three-phase stator currents (ia,ib,ic) of the PMSM drive under Model Predictive Current Control (MPCC). From 0 to 0.6 s, the applied torque demand is zero, and the corresponding current amplitudes remain low, with balanced sinusoidal waveforms confirming that the motor is operating under no-load conditions. The currents are phase-shifted by 120°, demonstrating proper synchronization with the inverter switching signals generated by the SVPWM-based ANPC inverter.

Under the suggested MPCC-SMO control method, the two-level inverter employing Space Vector Pulse Width Modulation (SVPWM) produces three-phase output voltages (Va, Vb, and Vc), which are shown in Fig.3.4. The waveforms make it evident that the inverter output is pulse-width modulated, with switching states alternating between positive and negative DC bus levels (Vdc/2). Through this modulation, quasi-square waveforms with different duty cycles are produced in order to generate the proper sinusoidal reference voltages.

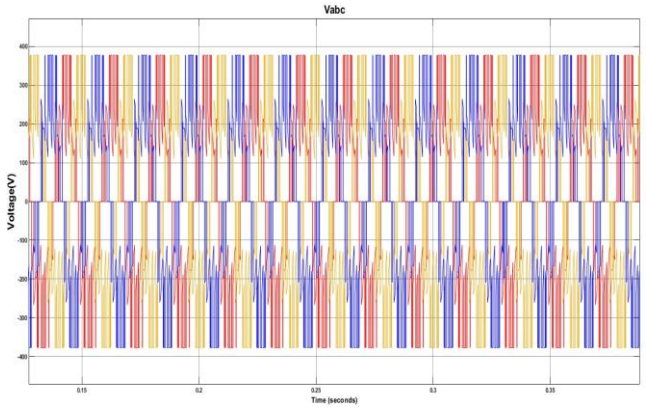

Fig. 3.4. Three-phase output voltages for inverters SVPWM is used by Vabc for the PMSM drive.

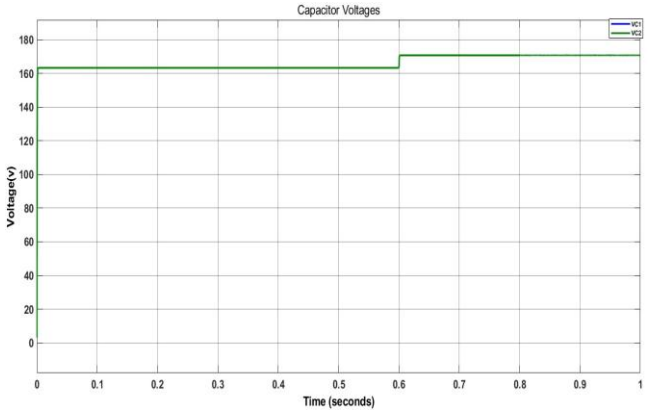

Fig.3.5.DC-link capacitor voltages (VC1,VC2) of the inverter under predictive control.

Fig.3.5. illustrates the capacitor voltages VC1 and VC2 of the split DC-link in the proposed inverter topology. It is observed that both capacitor voltages remain nearly equal and stable throughout the simulation, demonstrating the effectiveness of the control strategy in achieving **neutral-point voltage balancing**. The values of VC1 and VC2 stabilize around 160–170 V, with only a minor transient at approximately 0.6 s when the operating point changes.

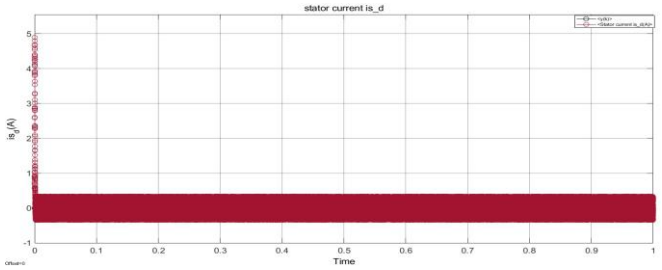

Fig.3.6.D-axis Current (**isd**)

The torque is **directly governed by** isq(torque-producing current).Isd ensures that the motor operates in **Maximum Torque per Ampere (MTPA)** mode, avoiding unnecessary copper losses.The **fast response** at 0.6 shows that the MPC provides **low delay and strong dynamic tracking**.The **smooth steady-state torque** demonstrates stability and robustness of control system.

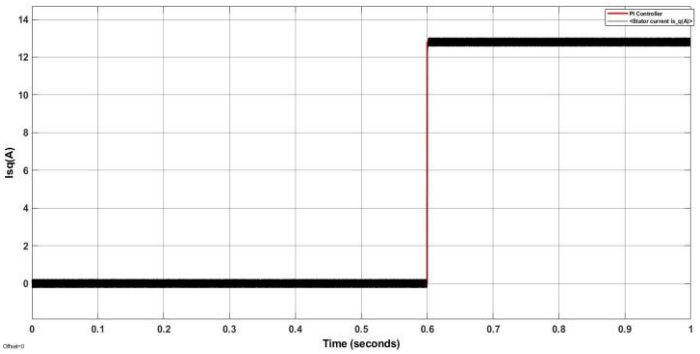

Fig.3.7.Q-axis Current (**isq**)

The torque-producing part of the stator current is represented by the q-axis current.In your simulation, isq remains **zero** up to 0.6 s, meaning no torque demand initially.At **0.6 s**, a step torque reference is applied, and isq rises sharply to the commanded value (~12.5 A).The rise is smooth, well-controlled, and without overshoot, showing **fast current tracking ability** of MPC controller.

IV.CONCLUSION

This study presents a sensorless Permanent Magnet Synchronous Motor (PMSM) drive system for electric vehicles (EVs) integrating Model Predictive Current Control (MPCC), a Sliding Mode Observer (SMO), and a three-level Active Neutral Point Clamped (ANPC) inverter with Space Vector Pulse Width Modulation (SVPWM), achieving a 0.01 s settling time, minimal torque ripple under an 8 N·m load applied at 0.6 s, and a speed estimation error below 1 rad/s, with speed stabilizing at 200 rad/s. The system ensures robust sensorless operation, with the d-axis current regulated near 0 A for flux control and the q-axis current reaching 12.5 A to govern torque ,while the ANPC inverter maintains stable 160–170 V capacitor voltages. This approach mitigates limitations of traditional Field-Oriented Control (FOC) and Direct Torque Control (DTC), offering a fast dynamic response, reduced harmonic distortion, and enhanced voltage utilization, For safety-critical applications like electric vehicles, fault-tolerant extensions with diagnostic and reconfiguration features can increase system reliability, while adaptive predictive control or hybrid observer-based estimation can provide robustness improvement against parameter variations and external disturbances.The predictive PMSM drive framework is a flexible and exciting field for further research and development because it may be used in robotics, industrial automation, and renewable energy systems in addition to vehicle propulsion.

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