COST EFFECTIVE TECHNIQUES FOR
BUILDING CONSTRUCTION
IN SRI LANKA
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ABSTRACT

The cost of construction is gradually becoming a deterrent for large scale projects since a high capital cost will need higher returns from the facilities to make the investments viable. Therefore, there is an urgent need to control the cost of construction per square metre in order to make civil engineering projects financially more attractive. This can create more employment in the civil and building sectors for all segments involved. During the past decade, a large number of alternative building materials have been developed for the housing sector. Some of these include walling materials, alternative slab systems and roofing materials. Some of these can match the performance in both structural and durability terms while costing less. Some of these also allow reducing the amount of money spent for finishes and may have savings in formwork/falsework requirements. Most of these products are environmentally more acceptable. In this research, the structural concepts are developed for adopting the alternative building materials for reinforced concrete frame construction used in large engineering projects. Detailed designs and costing based on work studies have been used to evaluate the cost advantages offered by the use of these alternative materials. This thesis presents the details of this study in terms of structural performance, durability, savings in finishes and cost aspects which can make the alternative building products much more popular for large building projects.

In Sri Lanka cement stabilized soil block technology is used for single and two-storey construction. It is yet to penetrate to large building projects. Another alternative to brickwork is chip concrete blocks. These are initially introduced as hand moulded blocks, but now becoming popular with machine moulding. The main advantages are greater strength, lower shrinkage and lesser use of cement. The feasibility of using these materials as infill walls is investigated. Another advantage is the ability to avoid the plastering thus achieving further cost saving.

An alternative reinforced concrete precast slab system was introduced to the housing sector recently. The feasibility of using this in framed building is also investigated. Based on all these investigations, the design methodology, construction techniques and alternative finishes were presented. Detailed cost studies were carried out to determine the cost savings associated with different combinations of adopting above alternative materials. The cost savings were calculated as the basis of the actual costs and the associated project costs.
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# Contents

Abstract .................................................. ii
Acknowledgement ................................. iii
Contents ........................................ iv
List of Figures ................................ xi
List of Tables ................................ xiii

Chapter 1: Introduction
1.1 General ........................................ 1
1.2 Objectives ....................................... 1
1.3 The methodology .............................. 2
1.4 Main findings .................................. 3
1.5 Arrangement of the thesis ................. 4

Chapter 2: Literature review ..................... 5
2.1 General ........................................ 5
2.2 Cement stabilised soil blocks ............. 6
  2.2.1 Stabilisation of soil ..................... 8
  2.2.2 Physical identification of soils suitable for stabilisation . . 8
  2.2.3 Methods of stabilisation for soil blocks .......... 10
  2.2.4 Process of block making ................ 11
  2.2.5 Machines available for making compressed block ....... 12
2.2.5.1 Cinva ram machine ........................................ 14
2.2.5.2 The Auram Press 3000 .................................... 15
2.2.5.3 Modified Cinva ram Interlocking block press .......... 16
2.2.6 Construction of structures with cement stabilised soil blocks........ 16
2.2.6.1 Foundations for cement stabilised soil block buildings ...... 17
2.2.6.2 Plasters and coatings ................................. 18
2.2.7 Soil blocks with Aurum Press 3000 .......................... 18
2.3 Hand moulded chip concrete blocks......................... 23
2.3.1 Selection of mix proportions................................. 24
2.3.2 Manufacturing of blocks ................................. 24
2.3.3 Compressive strength of hand moulded blocks ............ 24
2.4 Concrete floor systems ........................................ 25
2.4.1 Floor systems used in multi-storey buildings ........... 26
2.4.1.1 One way slabs on beams and walls.................... 26
2.4.1.2 Two-way slab on beams ................................ 26
2.4.1.3 One way pan joists and beams ......................... 27
2.4.1.4 One-way slab on beams and girders .................... 27
2.4.1.5 Two way flat plate .................................... 27
2.4.1.6 Two way flat slab .................................... 27
2.4.1.7 Waffle flat slab .................................... 27
2.4.2 Alternative floor systems used for buildings in Sri Lanka ...... 28
2.4.2.1 Precast prestressed concrete beam and insitu cast slab systems ... 28
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.4.2.2 Precast prestressed concrete beam and slab systems with hollow blocks</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.2.3 Precast reinforced concrete beam and slab system</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Summary</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3: Machine moulded chip concrete blocks</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Introduction</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Testing programme on machine moulded chip concrete blocks</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1 Objectives of the research</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2 The methodology carried out in the research programme</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2.1 Selection of mix proportions</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2.2 Manufacturing of Machine Moulded Chip Concrete Blocks</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2.3 Testing of the Machine Moulded Chip Concrete Blocks for strength</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2.4 Testing of the Machine Moulded Chip Concrete Blocks for shrinkage</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1 The manufacturing of Machine Moulded Chip Concrete Blocks</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.2 Testing of Machine Moulded Chip Concrete Blocks for compressive strength</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.2.1 Test results for compressing the Machine Moulded Chip Concrete Blocks</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.2.2 Calculation of compressive strengths of the Machine Moulded Chip Concrete Blocks</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.3 Shrinkage characteristics</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.3.1 Measuring Apparatus</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.3.2 Preparation of specimen</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.3.3 Measurement of drying shrinkage</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.3.4 Calculation of drying shrinkage of the MMCC Blocks</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 4: Precast reinforced concrete floor system

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Comparison between slab systems

4.3 The design study

4.3.1 Design of precast slab panels for construction and imposed loads

4.3.2 Design of precast beams for construction loads and imposed loads

4.3.3 Reinforcement details for precast slabs, beams and composite system

4.4 Adoption of alternative slabs for framed buildings

4.5 Summary

Chapter 5: Cost study

5.1 Introduction

5.2 The buildings used for case studies

5.3 Evaluation cost of individual items

5.3.1 Cost of machine moulded chip concrete blocks

5.3.1.1 Cost of cement

5.3.1.2 Cost of sand

5.3.1.3 Cost of chips

5.3.1.4 Cost of quarry dust

5.3.1.5 Cost of sand

5.3.1.6 Cost of machine usage

5.3.1.7 Cost of chip concrete blocks

5.3.1.8 Cost of 1:6 cement sand mortar for chip concrete blockwork
5.3.1.8.1 Cost of mortar for 400mm x 100mm x 200 mm blocks .............................. 54
5.3.1.8.2 Cost of mortar for 151/2"x5"x71/2" blocks ........................................... 54
5.3.1.9 Cost of labour for construction of chip concrete block walls ............. 55
5.3.1.10 Total cost for construction of 1 m² area of chip concrete blockwork .... 55
5.3.2 Cost of brick walls ................................................................. 56
5.3.2.1 Cost of 210 mm thick brick walls ............................................... 56
5.3.2.2 Cost of 110 mm thick brick walls ............................................... 57
5.3.3 Cost of precast panels ............................................................. 58
5.3.3.1 Cost of concrete ................................................................. 58
5.3.3.2 Cost of reinforcement per panel ............................................... 58
5.3.3.3 Cost of formwork ............................................................... 59
5.3.3.4 Cost of labour ................................................................. 59
5.3.3.5 Total cost per panel ............................................................. 59
5.3.4 Cost of precast beams ............................................................. 59
5.3.4.1 Cost of concrete ................................................................. 60
5.3.4.2 Cost of reinforcement per beam ............................................... 60
5.3.4.3 Cost of formwork ............................................................... 60
5.3.4.4 Cost of labour ................................................................. 61
5.3.4.5 Total cost per beam ............................................................. 61
5.3.5 Cost of the composite slab ....................................................... 61
5.3.5.1 Cost of labour for the composite slab ........................................ 61
5.3.5.2 Total cost of casting 1 m² of the composite slab .......................... 62
5.4 The cost study ................................................................. 62

5.5 The results of the cost study .................................................. 63

5.5.1 Cost of brick walls and MMCC block walls .......................... 63

5.5.1.1 Cost of 110mm. brick wall and 400 mm. x 100 mm. x 200 mm.
                      MMCC block wall

5.5.1.2 Cost of 210mm. thick brick wall and 151/2” x 5” x 71/2” MMCC block
                      wall ................................................................. 64

5.5.2 Costs of buildings used for the case study .......................... 64

5.5.2.1 Total amount of Bill of Quantities and the Total Estimated Costs of
                      Building 1

5.5.2.2 Total amount of Bill of Quantities and the Total Estimated Costs of
                      Building 2

5.6 Analysis on cost study ...................................................... 65

5.6.1 Comparison of brick walls with MMCC block walls ................. 65

5.6.1.1 Comparison of 110mm. thick brick wall with 400mm. x 100mm. x 200mm.
                      MMCC block wall .................................................. 65

5.6.1.2 Comparison of 210mm. thick brick wall with 151/2” x 5” x 71/2” MMCC block
                      wall ................................................................. 66

5.6.2 Analysis of cost study for solid slab system and composite slab system
                      for Building 1 and Building 2 ...................................... 66

5.6.2.1 Comparison of overall costs of Building 1 and Building 2 ......... 67

5.6.2.2 Comparison of seven cases considered for Building 1 & Building 2...

5.7 Conclusions ................................................................. 69

5.7.1 Conclusions on machine moulded chip concrete blocks ............ 69

5.7.2 Conclusions on precast reinforced concrete beam slab system ..... 70

5.7.3 Conclusions on overall projects by adopting alternative building
                      materials ............................................................... 71
5.8 Summary ............................................. 71
Chapter 6: Conclusions and future work.......................... 72
6.1 General ............................................. 72
6.2 Future works........................................ 73
References ............................................. 74
Appendix ............................................... 78
A Design of precast concrete reinforced concrete slab ............ 78
B1 Bill of quantities for Building 1................................ 97
B2 Summary sheet for Building 1.................................. 105
B3 Bill of quantities for Building 2 ............................... 106
B4 Summary sheet for Building 1 ................................. 115