

Study of Concrete Technology: Principles and Applications

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ABSTRACT:

The study of diverse materials, characteristics, and manufacturing and application techniques for concrete is a key component of concrete technology in construction engineering. This chapter attempts to investigate the most important facets of concrete technology and its importance in contemporary building methods. The study examines the components that make up concrete, including cement, aggregates, and water, and how they affect the finished product's strength, durability, and workability. It also looks at the many methods and tools used in the operations of mixing, laying, and curing concrete. In order to guarantee the effectiveness and durability of concrete buildings, the research also emphasizes the significance of quality control and testing processes. Engineers and construction specialists may improve the effectiveness and longevity of concrete structures by using sustainable practices and making educated judgments based on their knowledge of concrete technology.

KEYWORDS:

Concrete, Composition, Gel-Space Ratio, Physical Properties, Strength.

I. INTRODUCTION

Concrete is a multipurpose and often used building material that has significantly shaped the contemporary world. It has become the preferred material for a variety of building applications thanks to its capacity to offer strength, durability, and adaptability. The composition, manufacture, qualities, and uses of concrete will all be covered in this article. The history of concrete is lengthy and intriguing, going all the way back to the beginning [1], [2]. Ancient civilizations like the Egyptians and Romans, who utilized lime-based mortars in their construction endeavors, are the first to be known to have used concrete-like materials. The Romans, however, were the ones who made a big contribution to concrete technique. Pozzolana, a compound made of volcanic ash, lime, and water, was used to build strong structures like aqueducts, bridges, and houses. During the Middle Ages, the expertise of making concrete was forgotten, but it was rediscovered during the Industrial Revolution, which led to the creation of contemporary concrete. Cement, aggregates, water, and occasionally additives are the main components of concrete. The substance that binds the mixture together is cement.

Portland cement, the most used type of cement, is created by mixing clinker, a compound comprised of calcium silicates, with gypsum. Sand and gravel, two types of aggregate, give the concrete bulk and strength. When cement is hydrated, water is necessary because it interacts with the cement particles to create a solid matrix. Mixtures are optional additions that can change the characteristics of concrete, such as making it easier to work with, hastening or delaying the setting process, or making it more durable. There are various phases involved in making concrete. Cement, aggregates, and water are among the first raw resources to be obtained and properly kept. To obtain the appropriate grade and characteristics, the aggregates are carefully chosen and blended. Then, in a procedure called as batching, the cement and aggregates are combined, frequently with the addition of water and admixtures. Both hand mixing and the use of mechanical mixers are options. The concrete is mixed, then brought to the building site and positioned where it is needed.

After that, it is crushed to eliminate air pockets and guarantee appropriate consolidation. The concrete is next cured, which entails maintaining the right temperature and moisture levels to encourage hydration and the development of strength. Concrete is the perfect building material since it possesses a number of desired qualities. Its great compressive strength, which enables it to support huge loads, is one of its primary features. It is also quite durable, withstanding environmental elements including dampness, chemicals, and abrasion. Because of its superior fire resistance, concrete is a recommended material for constructions that need to be protected from fire. It offers adaptability in design and construction since it can be molded into different forms

and sizes. Additionally, concrete possesses thermal mass features that make it possible for it to both store and release heat, which helps structures use less energy [3], [4].

The uses for concrete are numerous and varied. Construction of buildings, bridges, dams, highways, and tunnels all frequently employ it. Concrete can be used for foundations, columns, beams, slabs, and walls while creating a structure. Precast concrete construction components, such as precast walls and flooring systems, provide quick and effective building solutions. Concrete is also used to make ornamental constructions and architectural facades, which are both decorative components. Additionally, concrete is used in infrastructure projects including the building of ports, airports, and motorways. It is a great option for these applications due to its capacity to sustain severe loads and resist degradation. Concrete has significant restrictions despite all of its benefits. Under tensile pressures, it is relatively fragile and prone to breaking. Reinforcement materials, such as steel bars or fibers, are frequently employed to increase the tensile strength of concrete buildings as a way to counteract this.

Cement manufacture, a vital ingredient in concrete, increases carbon dioxide emissions, which raises questions about the sustainability of the environment. The use of alternate cementitious materials and improved production methods, however, is the goal of continuing research and development projects to lessen the environmental effect of concrete. In summary, concrete is a multipurpose building material that has transformed the discipline of civil engineering. It is an essential part of contemporary infrastructure because of its extensive history, composition, manufacturing process, characteristics, and uses. Despite its shortcomings, concrete technology is always improving, leading to better performance and sustainability. Concrete will continue to play a crucial role in defining the built environment and satisfying the societal expectations as we move forward [5], [6].

Strength of Concrete: The capacity of concrete to bear applied loads and resist deformation depends critically on its strength. Compressive strength, or the maximum compressive force that a concrete specimen can support before failing, is the most common unit of measurement for concrete strength. The caliber and quantities of the ingredients that make up concrete, the curing environment, and the testing procedures are only a few of the variables that affect the material's compressive strength. The cementitious material used has the most impact on the strength of concrete. Portland cement, which is composed of calcium silicates, is the most widely used form of cement in concrete. The final strength of the concrete is significantly influenced by the chemical make-up and particle size of the cement. Although excessive quantities of cement can cause problems like greater heat generation during hydration and increased susceptibility to shrinkage, more cement content typically results in higher strength.

The strength of concrete is also influenced by the particles utilized. Sand, gravel, crushed stone, and lightweight aggregates are examples of materials that can be used as aggregates. Better packing and interlocking are made possible by well-graded aggregates with a range of particle sizes, which increases strength. The form, surface roughness, and strength of the aggregates, as well as their quality and other characteristics, have an impact on the total strength of the concrete. Another important element affecting the strength of concrete is the water-cement ratio. The weight ratio of water to cement in a concrete mixture is known as the water-cement ratio. Because denser concrete and a more effective hydration process occur from a lower water-cement ratio, increased strength is often the consequence. However, if the water-to-cement ratio is too low, the concrete may become unworkable and challenging to compress [7], [8].

The curing circumstances early in concrete's life have a big impact on how strong it becomes. Curing entails maintaining the right humidity and temperature levels for the cement to properly hydrate. Proper curing allows the establishment of maximum strength and helps avoid premature drying. Depending on the type of cement, the surrounding environment, and the intended strength, different curing times may be required. Compressive strength tests are frequently used to evaluate the strength of concrete. Concrete specimens are cast and cured under controlled circumstances. They are typically cylindrical or cubic in form. The specimens are put under a compressive force after a predetermined curing period until failure happens. Compressive strength is calculated by dividing the highest load at failure by the specimen's cross-sectional area.

The standard cylinder test (ASTM C39) and the cube test (BS EN 12390-3) are two examples of testing techniques. It is significant to remember that concrete's strength might change based on the particular application and structural constraints. When calculating the necessary strength of concrete for a specific project, designers and engineers take into account elements including the intended usage, projected loads, and safety considerations. Concrete can also become stronger over time through a process known as curing maturity, in which the strength keeps growing long beyond the original testing period. Overall, a number of variables, such as the characteristics of the elements that make up concrete, the water-to-cement ratio, curing conditions, and testing procedures, affect

concrete strength. Engineers can make concrete with the necessary strength qualities to guarantee the structural integrity and longevity of building projects by carefully managing these elements.

II. DISCUSSION

Composition of Concrete: Cement, aggregates, water, and occasionally additives are the main components of concrete. Every component is essential to the composition and characteristics of concrete.

1. **Cement:** Concrete's binding component, cement, keeps the mixture together. Portland cement, the most used type of cement, is created by mixing clinker, a compound comprised of calcium silicates, with gypsum. Hydration, a chemical interaction between water and cement that creates a solid matrix and gives concrete its strength and durability.

2. **Aggregates:** The majority of concrete is composed of granular aggregates. They may consist of substances like crushed stone, sand, gravel, and reclaimed concrete. The concrete mixture's aggregates provide it strength, stability, and volume. They contribute to the overall density and tensile strength of the cured concrete by filling the spaces between the cement particles.

a. **Fine Aggregates:** Sand-like particles that may pass through a 4.75 mm (No. 4) screen are referred to as fine aggregates. Typically, they are made by crushing rocks or obtained from natural sand deposits. A dense and cohesive mixture is produced as a result of the addition of fine aggregates, which also assist fill in the spaces between bigger particles [9], [10].

b. **Coarse Aggregates:** Larger particles that are retained on a 4.75 mm (No. 4) filter are referred to as coarse aggregates. They could consist of reclaimed concrete, crushed stone, or gravel. The concrete mixture is given bulk and strength by coarse particles, which also increases the concrete's resistance to compressive pressures.

3. **Water:** A crucial ingredient in the concrete mix is water. It starts the process of hydration, a chemical interaction between cement and water that results in the development of a matrix that is solid. The water-to-cement ratio (w/c ratio) is a crucial factor in determining the concrete's workability, strength, and durability. To maintain optimum hydration without generating excessive shrinkage or weakening the finished concrete, the amount of water used should be carefully regulated.

4. **Admixtures:** Admixtures are optional additives that are occasionally added to the concrete mixture to change certain characteristics. They may be divided into many sorts, such as superplasticizers, air entrainers, accelerators, and water reducers. Admixtures can provide concrete certain functional qualities, increase workability, decrease water consumption, control setting time, increase durability, etc.

It is important to keep in mind that the ratios of these elements might change based on the intended strength, workability, and particular needs of the concrete. To get the finished concrete mixture to have the appropriate qualities and performance, the components should be carefully chosen and combined. The process of choosing the ideal ratios of cement, aggregates, water, and admixtures to satisfy particular project needs and performance standards is known as mix design.

Gel-Space Ratio: In the study of cementitious materials, notably in the area of cement chemistry and paste characterisation, the phrase gel-space ratio is frequently employed. It speaks about the proportion between the volume of the gel phase's occupied space and the volume of the empty space in the cement paste. The hydration of cement in cementitious materials, such as concrete, causes the development of calcium silicate hydrate (C-S-H gel), a gel-like substance. The cement paste's binding and development of strength are due to this gel phase. The microstructure and packing of the cement paste are shown by the gel-space ratio. It shows how much of the available area the gel phase has filled. A microstructure that is more tightly packed and has a larger volume of gel filling the available space has a higher gel-space ratio. The water-cement ratio, the distribution of cement particle sizes, and the presence of additional cementitious materials or admixtures are some of the variables that affect the gel-space ratio. Because there is less water available to fill the space inside the paste, a low water-cement ratio often yields a greater gel-space ratio. The concrete may become stronger and more resilient as a result of this. Cement's particle size distribution also has an impact.

Greater gel-space ratios can result from greater packing provided by finer particles. On the other side, the existence of coarser particles may result in more space being accessible between the particles, which would reduce the gel-space ratio. The gel-space ratio can be changed by the inclusion of supplemental cementitious materials like fly ash or slag. These substances interact with cement during hydration and help create more gel. This might improve the performance of the cementitious material and raise the gel-space ratio. In general,

cementitious materials' microstructure and packing effectiveness are evaluated using a measure called the gel-space ratio. It is crucial to comprehending the durability, strength, and other technical characteristics of concrete. The gel-space ratio is a topic of research for scientists and engineers to improve mix formulations and enhance the performance of cement-based products.

Physical properties of Concrete: As a building material, concrete has a number of physical characteristics that enhance its performance and applicability for a range of uses. Concrete has several important physical characteristics, including:

1. **Density:** Concrete has a density of 2200 to 2500 kilograms per cubic meter (kg/m³), which is a rather high density. The density is affected by things like the kind and quantity of aggregates utilized. Concrete with a higher density offers superior fire and sound transmission resistance.
2. **Porosity:** Concrete has pores or microscopic spaces throughout its structure, making it a porous substance. Concrete's longevity and resistance to chemical attack, water absorption, and freeze-thaw cycles are all impacted by its porosity. Concrete's performance may be improved by reducing porosity with proper mix design and curing methods.
3. **Permeability:** A material's ability to permit the passage of liquids or gases is referred to as its permeability. Concrete is not entirely impermeable in its unaltered condition and can let the passage of water and other chemicals. However, using the right admixtures and curing methods may dramatically decrease the permeability of concrete, increasing its durability and water resistance.
4. **Thermal Conductivity:** Concrete is an excellent heat insulator because of its comparatively poor thermal conductivity. Due to this characteristic, it may be applied in situations where thermal insulation is necessary, such as in buildings and other structures. The thermal mass of concrete also enables it to retain heat and release it gradually, improving thermal comfort and energy efficiency.
5. **Strength:** A key physical characteristic of concrete that affects its capacity to support applied loads is its strength. As was previously noted, compressive strength, which indicates a material's resistance to compression, is the standard unit of measurement for concrete strength. Concrete's strength can vary based on elements including the water-to-cement ratio, the way it cures, and the caliber of the raw components.
6. **Shrinkage:** Concrete shrinks to some extent throughout the curing and drying processes. If shrinkage is not effectively managed, cracks may develop. Concrete may be made more durable and shrinkage can be reduced using methods like using shrinkage-reducing admixtures and adequate curing.
7. **Abrasion Resistance:** Concrete's resistance to abrasion, wear, and erosion is a crucial physical quality, particularly in locations with heavy foot traffic or for industrial uses. The abrasion resistance of concrete may be affected by a number of variables, including the hardness and quality of the particles.
8. **Color and Texture:** Concrete may be created in a number of hues and textures, providing a wide range of aesthetic options for use in architectural applications. To achieve desired hues, concrete may be colored with pigments or dyes, and surface finishing techniques can give concrete distinct textures and looks.

Concrete's physical characteristics make it a flexible and often used material in the building sector. For developing and creating long-lasting and structurally sound concrete structures, it is imperative to comprehend and regulate these qualities.

Proportioning of Concrete: To obtain the required qualities and performance of the concrete mixture, the necessary proportions of cement, aggregates, water, and admixtures must be determined. The strength, longevity, workability, and other required properties of the hardened concrete depend on proper proportioning. The general steps in the proportioning process are as follows:

- a. **Design Requirements:** Establishing the design criteria based on the particular project and application is the first stage in proportioning concrete. In doing so, it's important to take into account things like the intended strength, workability, durability, exposure circumstances, and any unique performance needs.
- b. **Cementitious Materials:** The design specifications and local availability are taken into consideration while choosing cementitious materials, principally Portland cement. The qualities of the concrete are influenced by the kind and grade of cement. The preferred water-cement ratio, which impacts the strength and workability of the concrete, is often used to calculate the amount of cement to use.

c. **Aggregates:** Aggregates are chosen for their particle size distribution, grading, form, and quality. This includes both fine and coarse aggregates. Aggregate proportions are chosen to provide a well-graded mix with high workability and strength. Usually, the aggregate volume is expressed as a proportion of the total volume of concrete.

d. **Water-Cement Ratio:** When proportioning concrete, the water-cement ratio (w/c ratio) is an important factor. It refers to the mixture's weight distribution between cement and water. The strength, use, and durability of the concrete are substantially impacted by the w/c ratio. A lower w/c ratio often results in more strength, but it may also mean less workability. Based on the design requirements and the ideal balance between strength and workability, the w/c ratio should be carefully evaluated.

e. **Admixtures:** Admixtures are optional additions that can change the concrete's characteristics. The choice and dosage of admixtures are determined by the particular needs of the project. Admixtures can provide concrete certain functional qualities, increase workability, decrease water consumption, control setting time, increase durability, etc.

f. **Mix Proportions:** Calculating the mix proportions requires knowledge of the amounts of cement, aggregates, water, and admixtures. Based on the required ratios, the density or specific gravity of the materials, and the weight or volume of each component, this is done. For convenience and ease of measurement, weight proportions (such as kilograms or pounds) or volume proportions (such as cubic meters or cubic feet) are frequently used.

g. **Trial Batches and Testing:** Trial batches and testing are frequently advised in order to verify the mix proportions and gauge the qualities of both the fresh and hardened concrete. This enables any required proportional changes and fine-tuning.

h. **Documentation:** For quality assurance and future use, accurate documentation of the mix proportions is crucial. For each batch of concrete produced, the mix proportions, including the amounts of each component, the water-cement ratio, and the particular needs, should be noted.

It is crucial to keep in mind that the proportioning procedure may change depending on elements like the intended strength, workability, particular project needs, and the available materials. In order to guarantee compliance with applicable laws, local ordinances, standards, and recommendations should be taken into account while proportioning concrete.

Revibration: The technique of vibrating or agitating previously put concrete to promote consolidation and get rid of any gaps or air pockets that may have developed during the initial placement is known as revibration in the context of concrete construction. Concrete is often compacted after placement using methods including hand tamping, mechanical shaking, or a mix of the two. It's possible that certain portions of the concrete still lack appropriate consolidation despite all of these efforts. This may occur for a number of reasons, including insufficient vibration, the existence of reinforcing bars or crowded regions, or difficulties in accessing certain concrete parts. Revibration is used to alleviate this problem. To guarantee thorough consolidation and the elimination of any trapped air gaps, it entails returning to the already-placed concrete and adding extra vibration. Depending on the particular needs of the project, revibration can be carried out using specialist vibrating apparatus, such as internal vibrators or surface vibrators. Enhancing the concrete's quality and integrity is the main goal of revibration. Revibration helps to raise the density and strength of the concrete by removing voids and enhancing consolidation, resulting in a more resilient and structurally sound material.

Additionally, it strengthens the connection between any embedded reinforcement, such steel bars or mesh, and the concrete. Usually, following the first concrete installation, a specified amount of time must pass before a revision is performed. The pace of concrete stiffening and the particular project needs, among other things, affect the timing. To guarantee good consolidation, revibration must be done before the concrete hardens too much. It's important to note that revibration must be done cautiously to prevent over-vibrating the concrete, which can cause segregation or displacement of particles, especially in mixes that are very workable or flowable. To guarantee that revibration is carried out effectively without resulting in any damage or compromising the overall quality of the concrete, proper training and competence are crucial. To summarize, revibration is a technique used in concrete building to enhance consolidation and get rid of any gaps or air pockets that could have appeared after original installation. Revibration improves the quality, density, and strength of the concrete by adding more vibration to the already-placed material. It is a crucial method for guaranteeing the longevity and integrity of concrete constructions.

Additional properties of Concrete: A number of crucial characteristics make concrete the perfect building material. Designing and building concrete buildings that can resist a range of loads and climatic conditions requires a thorough understanding of these qualities. One of the essential characteristics of concrete is strength. It describes concrete's capacity to endure pressures without breaking or deforming. To determine the total strength of concrete, the compressive strength is frequently tested. It depends on the kind and quantity of the materials employed, as well as how they are cured. Another crucial aspect of concrete is durability. It describes concrete's capacity to endure different environmental factors, such as exposure to moisture, chemicals, temperature variations, and freeze-thaw cycles, without suffering severe damage. Materials of a high grade, an appropriate mix design, adequate curing, and the application of protective coatings all contribute to durability.

Concrete's workability refers to how easily it can be mixed, poured, and finished. It is affected by the water-cement ratio, aggregate grading and shape, admixture application, and environmental factors at the time of placement. In order to achieve adequate consolidation and prevent problems like segregation or bleeding, the appropriate workability must be attained. In order to achieve required qualities, concrete technology's approaches are crucial. Concrete building relies heavily on the processes of mixing, putting, and curing. To create a homogeneous mixture, mixing entails blending cement, aggregates, water, and admixtures. A consistent and strong concrete is produced by proper mixing, which guarantees the components are distributed uniformly and encourages hydration. The act of dumping the concrete mixture into formwork or onto the building site is referred to as placing. To accomplish adequate consolidation and avoid segregation, it is crucial to take into account variables including the placement strategy, the tools utilized, and the requirement for reinforcement.

Curing is the process of keeping the concrete in a suitable moisture and temperature environment so that it can hydrate and gain strength. For concrete to reach its maximum strength and longevity, proper curing is essential. It can be accomplished using a variety of techniques, including membrane curing, water curing, and the use of curing chemicals. To ensure the effectiveness and durability of concrete buildings, quality control and testing processes are crucial in concrete technology. A number of tests are performed to evaluate the quality of the raw ingredients, such as the cement, aggregates, and water, as well as the qualities of the fresh and hardened concrete. These tests include, among others, slump tests, testing for compressive strength, water absorption tests, and tests for durability. Concerns about sustainability are expanding in concrete technology. To lessen the environmental effect of the manufacture of concrete, scientists and industry professionals are investigating other cementitious materials, such as fly ash and slag. To increase the sustainability of concrete structures, they are also researching cutting-edge methods like self-healing concrete and carbon capture.

III. CONCLUSION

Modern building methods heavily rely on the core topic of research known as concrete technology. This study has shed important light on the components, characteristics, and processes involved in the manufacture and use of concrete. Engineers and construction experts may optimize the design and building processes to obtain desired results by being aware of the important aspects affecting concrete's strength, durability, and workability. In order to assure the best performance and endurance of concrete buildings, the research has underlined the necessity of employing high-quality materials, suitable mixing processes, and appropriate curing methods. In order to monitor and evaluate the quality of concrete throughout both the production and application phases, it is also crucial to employ strict testing protocols and quality control techniques. The research also underlines the significance of environmentally friendly procedures in concrete technology. Researchers and practitioners are investigating alternative cementitious materials, such as fly ash and slag, and adopting cutting-edge techniques like self-healing concrete and carbon capture to reduce the environmental impact of concrete production in response to the growing demand for environmentally friendly construction materials. In conclusion, concrete technology is a dynamic area that keeps developing as materials science and building methods grow. Engineers and construction experts may help build concrete buildings that are long-lasting, effective, and ecologically friendly by keeping up with the latest research and using sustainable methods.

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