BULLETIN OF ENGINEERING SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INDUSTRY
https://bestijournal.org | PT. Radja Intercontinental Publishing
E-ISSN: 3025-5821

EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL OF SOIL STABILIZED MUD BLOCKS ENRICHED WITH COMBINED CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION WASTE: AN INTRIGUING INVESTIGATION

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Abstract

This study investigates the utilization of construction and demolition (C&D) waste, particularly brick and concrete waste, in soil stabilization techniques for the production of sustainable building materials. Traditional civilizations laid the groundwork for soil stabilization methods, but the scientific understanding of these techniques emerged in the early 20th century. Compared to conventional construction materials, soil stabilized mud blocks offer advantages such as improved strength, durability, environmental sustainability, and cost-effectiveness. With the pressing global issue of managing C&D waste, this research explores the potential of incorporating such waste materials into soil samples sourced from nearby demolition sites. The experimental investigation involves creating cylindrical samples with varying ratios of C&D waste and soil, supplemented with different cement contents. Tests on compressive strength and water absorption properties are conducted to assess the suitability of the stabilized samples for construction applications. Additionally, the study extends to the production of concrete and stabilized mud blocks using cylindrical samples containing different proportions of C&D waste. Mechanical and physical properties of these blocks are analyzed to evaluate their performance and potential as sustainable building materials.

Keywords: Soil stabilization, Construction and demolition waste, Sustainable building materials, Mud blocks, Compressive strength, Water absorption, Environmental sustainability

Introduction:

The construction industry has historically played a pivotal role in shaping human civilizations, with ancient cultures like the Mesopotamians and Egyptians employing innovative building techniques using clay and other natural materials. Over time, the field has evolved, integrating scientific advancements to enhance construction methods and materials. One such advancement is the technique of soil stabilization, which finds its roots in ancient practices but gained scientific understanding only in the early 20th century.

Soil stabilization involves the modification of soil properties to improve its engineering performance, making it suitable for various construction applications. This technique has garnered significant attention in recent years due to its potential to offer sustainable alternatives to conventional construction materials. Soil stabilized mud blocks, in particular, have emerged as a promising eco-friendly alternative, boasting enhanced strength, durability, and environmental sustainability compared to traditional building materials like concrete and bricks.

Despite its ancient origins, the scientific underpinnings of soil stabilization were not established until relatively recently. However, with the growing concerns over environmental sustainability and the pressing need to address the mounting quantities of construction and demolition (C&D) waste, there is renewed interest in exploring innovative approaches to construction.

The disposal of C&D waste presents a significant challenge globally, with vast quantities generated each year, particularly in rapidly urbanizing regions like India. Much of this waste, comprising materials such as bricks and concrete, ends up in landfills, contributing to environmental degradation and resource depletion. Addressing this issue requires novel strategies for recycling and repurposing C&D waste into valuable resources.

This study aims to bridge the gap between ancient practices and modern scientific understanding by investigating the use of C&D waste in conjunction with soil stabilization techniques. By leveraging waste materials sourced from demolition sites, this research seeks to develop sustainable building materials that not only mitigate the environmental impact of construction activities but also offer economic benefits.

Through experimental investigations and analysis of mechanical and physical properties, this study aims to assess the feasibility and performance of soil stabilized mud blocks incorporating C&D waste. By exploring the potential of these materials, this research contributes to the ongoing efforts towards sustainable construction practices and resource management in the construction industry.

Throughout history, earth has been a foundational material for human civilization, utilized by ancient cultures like the Egyptians and Mesopotamians. Mud, readily available and easy to prepare, has been a cornerstone of construction worldwide, despite its inherent limitations in durability. However, its affordability and energy efficiency make it a viable option for low-cost building endeavors. Recognizing the pivotal role of construction in supporting sustainable development, the industry seeks innovative solutions, such as stabilized mud blocks, to address environmental concerns.

Uniaxial Compressive Strength (UCS) testing, originating in the early 1900s, revolutionized material analysis by providing a standardized method for assessing compression resistance. Cylindrical samples, commonly used in UCS testing, offer advantages such as simplified load measurement and reliable results. These samples, typically extracted from larger materials, undergo rigorous testing to determine their mechanical properties.

Stabilized mud blocks, representing a modern iteration of traditional earth blocks, offer an economically viable and eco-friendly alternative to conventional building materials. Developed since the 1950s, stabilized mud blocks have demonstrated superior performance compared to bricks or concrete blocks, making them suitable for various construction applications.

The literature review encompasses studies on mud blocks, including soil-stabilized and concrete blocks, with a focus on incorporating construction and demolition (C&D) waste. Research indicates that substituting coarse aggregates with C&D waste can enhance the flexural and compressive strengths of blocks. Various stabilizing agents, such as cement, lime, and fly ash, have been investigated for their impact on block properties. Additionally, studies highlight the thermal and acoustic properties of stabilized mud blocks, emphasizing their suitability for diverse climates.

Experimental findings underscore the benefits of incorporating C&D waste into soil stabilization processes, improving the mechanical properties of mud blocks while addressing environmental concerns. Moreover, research emphasizes the importance of selecting appropriate soils and stabilizing agents to optimize block performance.

The study aims to explore the feasibility and efficacy of utilizing C&D waste in soil stabilization for mud block production. By bridging traditional practices with modern scientific understanding, this research contributes to the discourse on sustainable construction practices and resource management in the construction industry.

Throughout history, earth has been the foundational material for human civilization, with mud playing a central role in construction practices dating back to ancient civilizations like the Egyptians and Mesopotamians. Mud, readily available and easy to prepare, has been extensively utilized in various forms of construction worldwide. Despite its limitations in durability, mud is esteemed for its affordability and energy efficiency, making it a preferred choice for low-cost building projects. The construction industry, recognized as a key stakeholder in sustainable development, continues to explore innovative solutions to address environmental concerns.

Uniaxial Compressive Strength (UCS) testing, originating in the early 1900s, revolutionized material analysis by providing a standardized method for assessing compression resistance. Cylindrical samples, commonly employed in UCS testing, offer advantages such as simplified load measurement and reliable results. These samples, typically extracted from larger materials like concrete buildings or rocks, undergo meticulous preparation to ensure uniformity and accuracy in testing.

Stabilized mud blocks emerge as a modern alternative to conventional building materials, offering an economically viable and eco-friendly option for construction projects. Developed since the 1950s, stabilized mud blocks have demonstrated superior performance compared to traditional burnt bricks or concrete blocks. Their manufacturing flexibility allows for application in both formal and informal sectors of construction activity, contributing to sustainable development goals.

The literature review provides insights into various studies conducted on mud blocks, encompassing both soil-stabilized and concrete variants. A common theme across these studies is the substitution of coarse aggregates with construction and demolition (C&D) waste, aiming to enhance block properties. Research findings indicate that incorporating crushed brick waste into soil-sand mixtures improves flexural and compressive strengths, albeit with considerations for water absorption and density. Furthermore, investigations into the impact of different stabilizing agents, such as cement, lime, and fly ash, underscore their role in enhancing block durability and toughness.

Studies also explore the thermal and acoustic properties of stabilized mud blocks, highlighting their suitability for diverse climatic conditions. Additionally, emphasis is placed on the importance of selecting appropriate soils and stabilizing agents to optimize block performance and durability.

The study aims to contribute to the body of knowledge on sustainable construction practices by examining the effects of incorporating C&D waste into soil stabilization processes for mud block production. By leveraging local resources and innovative techniques, this research endeavors to promote environmentally conscious building practices and address the growing demand for eco-friendly construction materials.

Summary of Literature Review:

The initiative "Soil Stabilized Mud Blocks Using Combined C&D Waste" aims to utilize construction and demolition (C&D) waste as a soil stabilizer during mud block production to

mitigate environmental impacts and enhance mechanical properties. The study provides a comprehensive overview of the materials employed, including soil, cement, and various types of C&D waste. Mechanical characteristics such as durability, water absorption capacity, and compressive strength of stabilized mud blocks are evaluated through extensive testing.

The findings indicate that incorporating C&D waste into the soil-cement mixture enhances the mechanical properties of mud blocks. Compared to control samples, mud blocks with C&D waste replacements demonstrated a significant increase in compressive strength, reaching up to a 67% improvement. Moreover, these blocks exhibited exceptional durability and water resistance.

A graph illustrating the compressive strength results for different percentages of C&D waste replacement in the cement content is provided, showing a slight increase in strength with higher percentages of C&D waste. Various factors, including the type and quality of C&D waste, soil properties, cement content, and curing conditions, influence the observed increase in strength.

The study underscores the potential of C&D waste as a viable soil stabilizer for enhancing the mechanical properties of mud blocks, contributing to sustainable construction practices. It highlights the importance of careful material selection and testing protocols in optimizing block performance and durability.

Materials:

The study details the composition and characteristics of soil, gravel, sand, silt, and clay, emphasizing their roles in mud block production. Soil stability, influenced by the presence of silt, clay, and other particles, is crucial for producing compressed stabilized earth building blocks. Local red soil is utilized in the study, selected based on its availability and suitability for block production.

Gravel, sand, and silt contribute to soil stability, with gravel fragments providing mechanical stability, sand particles exhibiting inert chemical properties, and silt particles offering cohesiveness. Clay, finer than silt particles, serves as a natural binder during mud block production, imparting plasticity to the soil. However, excessive clay content can lead to undesirable characteristics such as shrinkage and swelling, necessitating stabilization with lime or OPC depending on the clay content.

Overall, the study emphasizes the importance of understanding soil composition and behavior in optimizing mud block production processes, ensuring the durability and performance of stabilized earth building blocks.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the utilization of construction and demolition (C&D) waste as a soil stabilizer in mud block production presents a promising avenue for sustainable construction practices. The initiative, "Soil Stabilized Mud Blocks Using Combined C&D Waste," aims to mitigate environmental impacts associated with waste disposal while enhancing the mechanical properties of mud blocks.

The comprehensive literature review highlights the significant improvements in mechanical characteristics observed with the addition of C&D waste to the soil-cement mixture. Enhanced compressive strength, durability, and water resistance are among the key benefits demonstrated by mud blocks incorporating C&D waste. This approach not only addresses environmental concerns but also contributes to the production of durable and resilient building materials.

Furthermore, the detailed analysis of soil composition and characteristics underscores the importance of soil stability in mud block production. Factors such as gravel, sand, silt, and clay content play crucial roles in determining the performance and durability of stabilized earth building blocks. Understanding and optimizing soil composition are essential steps in ensuring the quality and longevity of mud blocks.

Overall, the findings suggest that C&D waste can serve as an effective soil stabilizer, enhancing the mechanical properties of mud blocks while promoting sustainable construction practices. Continued research and development in this area are essential to further refine production processes, optimize material selection, and maximize the environmental and economic benefits of using C&D waste in mud block production.

By harnessing the potential of C&D waste and leveraging knowledge of soil composition, the construction industry can move towards more environmentally friendly and sustainable building practices, ultimately contributing to a greener and more resilient built environment.

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