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EVOLUTION OF SEISMIC DESIGN OF STRUCTURES, SYSTEMS AND COMPONENTS OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS

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ABSTRACT

Safety of the personnel of a nuclear power plant (NPP) and the environment around the plant should be ensured against all natural hazards including earthquakes. With public safety as the paramount concern, NPP facilities are designed to withstand low-probability, high-magnitude earthquakes. In this paper, details are discussed regarding the evolution of seismic analysis and design aspects of nuclear power plant structures, systems and components.

KEYWORDS: Nuclear Power Plant, Seismic Analysis, Design of SSCs, Retrofitting

INTRODUCTION

The constituent systems of nuclear power plants (NPPs), known as SSCs, are broadly classified into structures, systems (i.e., piping, electrical, control and instrumentation) and components with unique characteristics of their own. The structures, systems and components of an NPP need to be designed for normal operating loads such as dead weight, weight of supporting systems and components, pressure, temperature, normal operating vibratory loads, and accidental loads caused due to both external and internal events. The severity of external events is site-specific and depends on the site where the facility is proposed to be set up. To ensure adequate safety of the facility, an appropriate site determined by the siting criteria of NPPs needs to be selected. This site has to be examined with respect to the frequency and severity of natural phenomena and man-induced events. One of the accidental natural phenomena is earthquake.

NPPs in India have their origin in the setting up of two boiling water reactors by General Electric in 1969. This was followed by the growth of NPPs in India with the CANDU pressurized heavy water reactors (PHWRs) of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, Canada set up in 1973. The evolution of seismic design criteria had its beginning in the development of the indigenous nuclear programme.

The recognition of seismic design requirements for NPPs other than those defined in various codes began in the late 1960s. The early plants designed, for example in U.S.A., had no seismic requirements. With the exception of active seismic regions, the resultant lateral seismic loads were less than the applicable lateral wind loads and would thus have little or no consequence on the design of engineered industrial facilities.

The safety considerations under earthquake loading with regard to nuclear facilities and the requirement of appropriate seismic investigation were not recognized in the plants set up in late 60’s in India. The designs were performed by considering normal building codes and by arbitrarily increasing for NPPs the applicable seismic coefficients for the sites. The siting of plants in seismically prone regions (e.g., Narora) led to the development of specific seismic design criteria for nuclear power plants. These procedures became rigorous as regulatory requirements evolved. The development and current status with respect to seismic inputs, analysis and design of structures, systems and components are traced in this article.

GROUND MOTION

The possibility of earthquake damage to a NPP facility in contrast to a fossil fuel power facility constitutes a special safety problem due to the possibility of release of fission products. An uncontrolled release to the atmosphere would constitute a very serious hazard to human life in the immediate vicinity of the reactor and could lead to a serious biological hazard over a large area over a considerable period. Earthquakes are thus low-probability high-risk events.

The recognition of the need to have nuclear structures and systems designed for higher levels than specified by Indian codes began with Madras Atomic Power Station. The seismic design basis for this was taken as the lateral load coefficient of 0.1*g* against the horizontal coefficient of 0.02*g* as per IS-1893 for Zone II. The post-Koyna revision of the IS-1893 code and the siting of NPPs in seismically prone regions led to the introduction of an importance factor of 6 for the preliminary design of NPP structures in BIS (1975). The design of Dhruva Research Reactor was based on this approach. All NPPs since the Narora Atomic Power Station have been designed by using the site-specific ground motion criteria.

ESTABLISHMENT OF SITE-SPECIFIC GROUND MOTION

1. Deterministic Basis

1.1 Geological Investigations

To ensure the safety of a plant, detailed seismological and geological studies need to be performed considering the aspects such as capable faults, frequencies of earthquakes of different magnitudes (i.e., seismic activity), slope instability, liquefaction potential. An area of a circle of 300 km radius around the site is considered for investigation.

Geological investigations help in knowing the tectonic setting of the region, to arrive at the maximum earthquake potential associated with each active tectonic feature and to postulate the design basis events. Lineaments/faults are identified and studied particularly with respect to topography and geomorphology to find evidences of recent ground displacements and to ascertain their age and continuity. The faults are studied for assessing the seismic activities and identifying the various capable faults. Local tectonics, structural relationships of various faults, and correlations with historical earthquakes are studied.

1.2 Investigations of Past Earthquakes

All historical and instrumental earthquake data is collected. This primarily includes the data on magnitude or intensity, epicenter, depth of focus, duration of strong motion, and velocity and zone of influence depicted in isoseismic maps. This data helps in assessing the magnitudes and locations of possible earthquakes in the region.

1.3 Evaluation of Design Basis Ground Motion

The design basis ground motion at a site is given in terms of (i) peak ground acceleration and response spectral shapes for various values of damping, and (ii) time history of free-field acceleration in the horizontal and vertical directions. Based on the safety criteria, the systems of NPP are required to be designed for the S1 and S2 earthquakes in accordance with the national standards.

S1 Earthquake: This corresponds to the level of ground motion that can be reasonably expected to be experienced at the site area during the operating life of the plant. This is also referred to as the operating basis earthquake (OBE).

S2 Earthquake: This corresponds to the level of ground motion that has a very low probability of being exceeded and has a return period of the order of 10,000 years. This is referred to as the safe shutdown earthquake (SSE). All NPPs have to be designed such that, if a safe shutdown earthquake occurs, certain structures, systems and components remain functional to ensure the following:

- integrity of the reactor coolant boundary;
- capability to shut down the reactor and maintain it in safe shutdown condition; and
- capability to prevent or mitigate consequences or accidents resulting in an off-site exposure.

For an S2 level earthquake, conservatism in design is ensured by first postulating the occurrence of the potentially largest earthquake at the nearest point to the site on the seismically active structure or at the border of the seismo-tectonic provinces located within a tectonic zone of 300 km and then by estimating the peak ground acceleration to be produced at the site. Due consideration is given to the induced seismicity resulting from large dams/reservoirs or from extensive fluid injection/extraction from the ground.

The peak ground acceleration for a S1 earthquake is derived on the basis of historical earthquakes that have affected the site area. This has a low probability of being exceeded during the operating life of the plant. This has generally been defined as minimum one-half of that for SSE and under this event the plant is intended to remain in operation. However, an inspection is necessary on the seismic disturbance crossing the threshold value. This has become a utility and economic criterion, and the peak ground acceleration for OBE is sometimes lowered to one-third of that for SSE. Such a reduction, while reducing the plant cost, results in more frequent requirement of inspection and thus increased shutdown time.

In the absence of adequate strong-motion time histories obtained from the site, data collected from places having similar seismic and geological characteristics may be used. The confidence level of the specified response spectral shape should be conservatively high. This approach has been used in defining the site-specific inputs for the plants in India. In mid-80s, the concept of design standardization for the plants to be installed at the sites having similar seismological and geological conditions originated. Under this concept and based on the steps explained above, design inputs can be evolved and an envelope of the same that suits all the sites can be used for the design. One typical envelope design response spectrum for 7% damping, which meets the site requirements of Tarapur in Maharashtra, Kakrapar in Gujarat and Nagarjunasagar in Andhra Pradesh, was developed as shown in Figure 1. A response spectrum-compatible time history for this spectrum is shown in Figure 2.

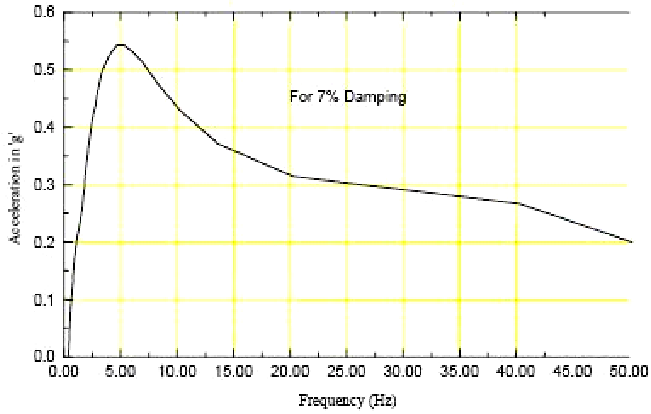


Fig. 1 Typical envelope design response spectrum for 7% damping

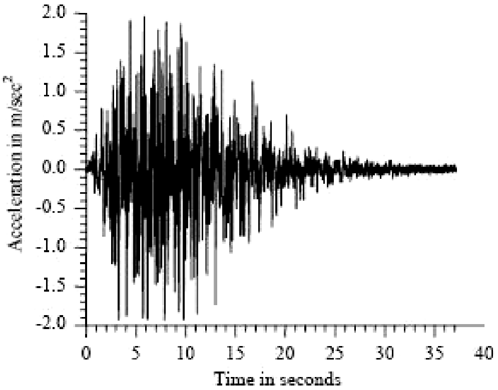


Fig. 2 Typical envelope design response spectrum-compatible time history

2. Uniform Hazard Spectra and Performance-Based Spectra

Internationally, it is recommended to adopt uniform hazard response spectrum (UHRS) and performance-based, site-specific, earthquake ground motions for a rational and graded approach to the design of SSCs of nuclear facilities. A probabilistic seismic hazard assessment (PSHA) provides an evaluation of the SSE recurrence during the design lifetime of the given facility, given the recurrence interval and recurrence pattern of earthquakes in the pertinent seismic sources. Within the framework of probabilistic analysis, uncertainties in the characterization of seismic sources and ground motions are identified and incorporated in the procedure at each step in the determination of SSE. This is now in place as an approach in USNRC regulatory guide 1.208 (USNRC, 2007a). UHRS involves following steps:

i) Carry out site- and region-specific geological, seismological, geophysical, and geotechnical investigations and develop an up-to-date site-specific database that supports site characterization and PSHA.
ii) Conduct probabilistic hazard analysis.
iii) Carry out probabilistic seismic hazard assessment.
iv) Develop UHRS for the annual exceedance frequencies of 1×10^{-4}, 1×10^{-5} and 1×10^{-6} at minimum of 30 structural frequencies approximately equally spaced on logarithmic frequency axis between 0.1 and 100 Hz.
v) Deaggregate mean probabilistic hazard characterization at the above annual frequencies.

The use of UHRS approach requires the availability of earthquake occurrence information associated with the known tectonic structures. Further, sufficiently large data samples need to be available. Efforts are now on to collect such information in the context of the Indian sub-continent. Work has been completed for a few sites such as Mumbai, Tarapur, and Kalpakkam. More work is to be carried out in order to develop confidence for adopting this procedure in NPP designs. A typical comparison of the UHRS and performance-based ground motion response spectrum as given in USNRC (2007a) is given in Figure 3.

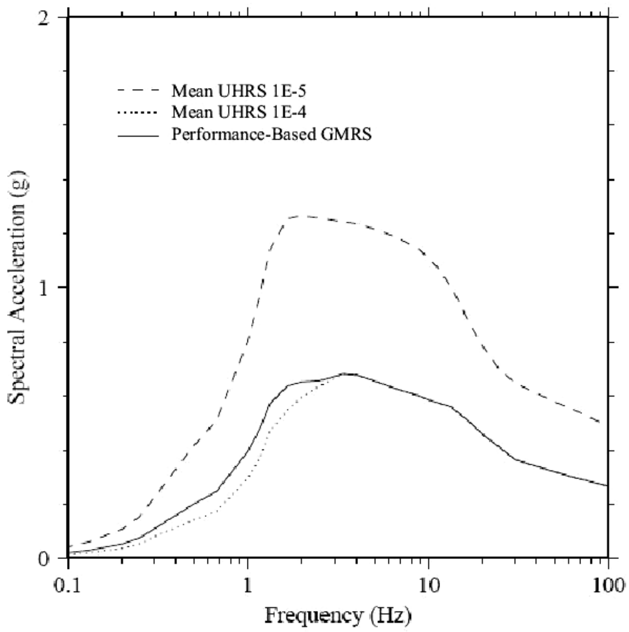


Fig. 3 Comparison of the mean 1×10^{-4} and 1×10^{-5} uniform hazard response spectra and the performance-based ground motion response spectrum

3. Tsunamis

With the occurrence of the great Indian Ocean tsunami on December 26, 2004, which had a pronounced effect on the eastern coast of India, suitable criteria are now in place in the regulatory standards of India. This has led to the development of a BIS standard for tsunami resistant design for buildings and structures. These criteria will also be introduced appropriately for NPP design.

EARTHQUAKE ANALYSIS

Indian standard code, IS 1893 (BIS, 2002), does not cover the earthquake-resistant design of nuclear structures. Hence, international standards, such as ASCE 4-1998 standard (ASCE, 2000), and various

USNRC regulatory guides and ASME codes are adopted for the analysis and design of NPP structures. Nevertheless, a code relevant in the Indian context is currently under publication by Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB).

The equilibrium equations for a structure may be written in the following form:

$$[M]\{\ddot{u}\}+[C]\{\dot{u}\}+[K]\{u\}=-[M]\{1\}\ddot{u}_g \quad (1)$$

where $[M]$ is the mass matrix of the structure, $[C]$ is the damping matrix of the structure along with the supporting soil, $[K]$ is the stiffness matrix of the structure along with the supporting soil, and $\{1\}$ is the influence vector.

The coupled set of equations given in Equation (1) is solved simultaneously by using a numerical technique (Bathe and Wilson, 1976). The other approach is to de-couple the equations by using a modal transformation. This leads to equations at the modal level that can be solved independently. Such a transformation uses eigenvectors and eigenvalues, which represent the mode shapes and circular frequencies squared for the system, respectively. However, the analysis is generally carried out by using the standard commercial finite element (FE) packages, such as COSMOS, NISA, and ANSYS.

For accurate response predictions in SSCs subjected to the design ground motions derived as explained above, the inertia, stiffness and damping matrices of the SSCs need to be modeled appropriately. Some of the details of these parameters with regard to SSCs are explained below.

MATHEMATICAL MODELING OF STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS

Once the design input has been obtained, the next step is to collect the geometrical, material, loading and supports information of SSCs. With the help of this data along with the design earthquake input, analysis is performed to obtain the induced forces or stresses in the SSCs. The first step of analysis is modeling.

The mathematical model of the system should adequately represent the dynamic characteristics of the physical system, e.g., mass, stiffness and damping. For reactor building structures, stick models have been in vogue and have been refined over the years. The reactor buildings in Narora, for example, have been analyzed by using 2-D stick models. Certain structures and systems like Calandria end shield assembly have been included in coupled 2-D models. A refined approach using a 3-D stick model with the coupling of certain systems, as adopted in Tarapur for the 500 MWe PHWR, is briefly described here.

The nuclear containment structure and the model considered for the 500 MWe PHWR at Tarapur are shown in Figure 4. The containment structure consists of the internal structure (INTS) and calandria vault (CV) contained in the coaxial inner and outer containment walls (ICW and OCW) and cast monolithically with a circular raft. The OCW consists of a cylindrical reinforced concrete wall that has the diameter of 54.72 m and supports a reinforced concrete torispherical dome. The ICW consists of a prestressed cylindrical reinforced concrete wall that has the inner diameter of 49.5 m and supports a prestressed concrete torispherical dome. The INTS supports fuelling machines, steam generators, pumps, pressuriser, a large number of piping systems, etc. The CV supports the calandria end-shield assembly, reactor control devices, etc.

For evaluating seismic response, the model considered should represent the structure as accurately as possible. The finite element method has been most popular in modeling structures for seismic analysis. There is no difficulty in modeling a frame-type structure. However, the modeling of a containment structure with complex geometry and made of shear walls, beams, columns and floors is not straight-forward.

A containment structure can be modeled accurately either by plate/shell or by 3-D brick elements. However, the analysis may be very cumbersome and time-consuming. This also requires large memory and high-speed computing facilities. If the stiffness variation is large in the structure, there could be numerical problems. To avoid these problems, beam models are normally used for obtaining the global seismic response. These are finally applied on the 3-D finite element model for evaluating the design stresses.

1. Modeling of Structural Stiffness

1.1 Beam Model

There are, in principle, two techniques to evaluate the stiffness of a beam model: (i) the conventional 2-D beam model technique; and (ii) the 3-D beam model technique based on strain-energy equivalence. These techniques are explained below.

Conventional 2-D Beam Model Technique: This is commonly used where the shear centers of various structural sections lie on the centerline of the building. Moreover, it is assumed that the structure behaves like a beam, and classical beam assumptions are valid. The mass of the structure is lumped at a series of nodes at the center of the building. The beam-section properties, such as cross-sectional area, shear area, moment of inertia, are calculated by using the classical formulae. These properties are then used for calculating the stiffness of the member. The effects of the flexibility of slabs, offset, partial support, etc., are neglected. The properties for containments and raft are also calculated by using the classical formulae (Reddy et al., 1996).

3-D Beam Model Technique Based on Strain-Energy Equivalence: In this method, the structure is modeled by using 3-D beam properties derived based on the strain-energy equivalence between 3-D finite element model and 3-D beam model (Reddy et al., 1997). Unlike the above method, lateral torsional coupling and the effect of flexibility in floors, offset and partial support of walls is accounted for. In this method, the beams are located at the shear center.

1.2 3-D Model

In the case of structural systems, which are integrated and connected, the stick-model approaches are not feasible. A 3-D finite element model becomes the appropriate option, with high-capacity computing options being available.

The nuclear island connected building (NICB) of PFBR is a large reinforced concrete building of size 92.6×83.2 m in plan as shown in Figure 5(a). It consists of a centrally located reactor containment building, which is surrounded by seven buildings, connected monolithically with each other and supported on a common base raft of size 101.80×92.4 m. The resisting system of the structure consists of shear walls and frames made of beams and columns. The response of the structure to various static and seismic conditions is evaluated by considering the effects due to soil-structure interaction, coupled and decoupled secondary systems, and fluid-structure interaction. Figure 5(a) gives a 3-D view and the plans of the structure. Figure 5(b) depicts the 3-D finite element model. Tables 1 and 3 indicate a few fundamental frequencies of the structural system.

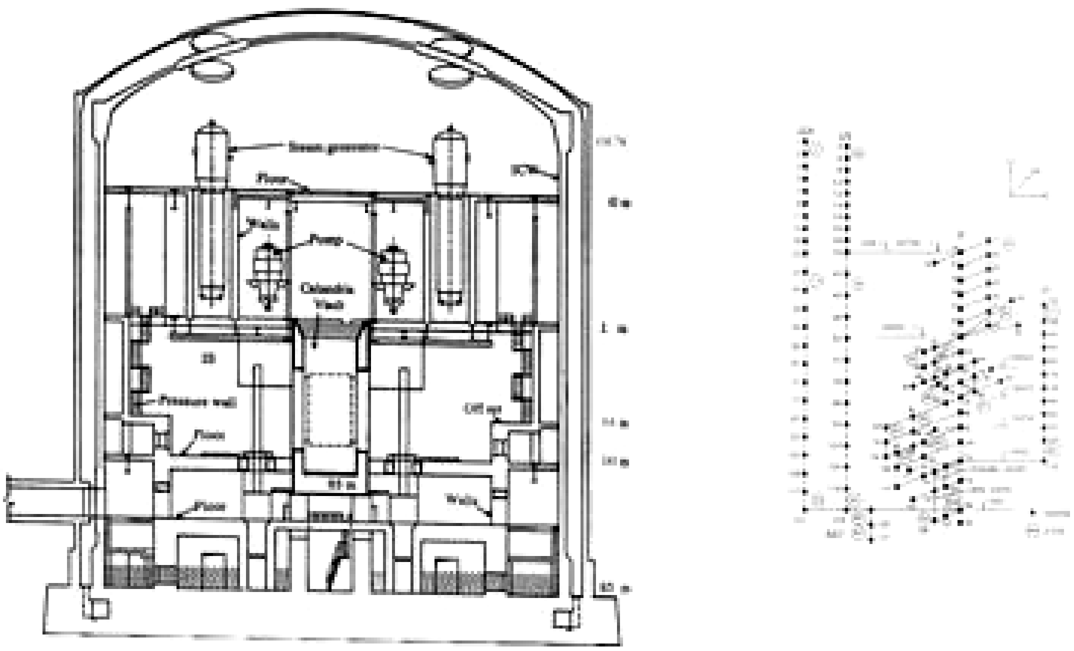
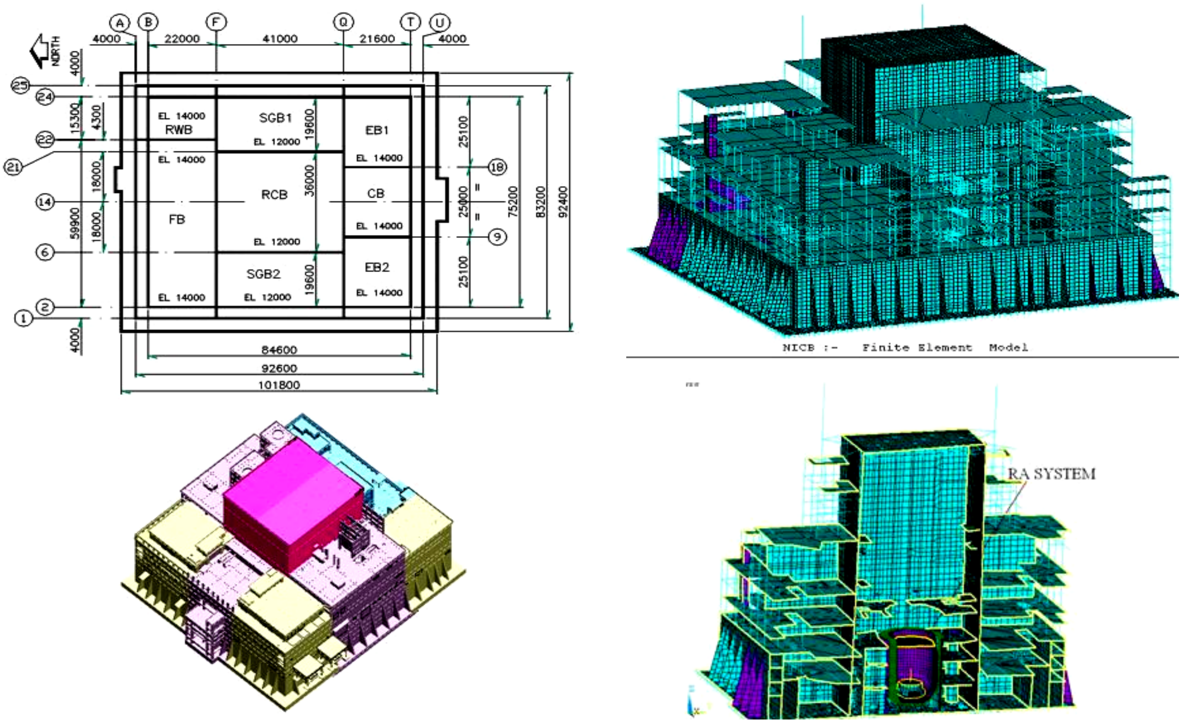


Fig. 4 500 MWe PHWR containment structure and 3-D beam model

Table 1: Comparison of Frequencies and Participation Factors of Reactor Building

Mode	3-D FEM Model		Beam Model			
			Strain Energy Based		Conventional	
	Frequency (Hz)	Participation Factor	Frequency	Participation Factor	Frequency	Participation Factor
1	3.70 (E-W)	41.38	3.73	43.76	5.45	41.63
2	3.87 (N-S)	36.74	4.03	40.26	5.46	40.90
3	9.27 (Vertical)	25.00	9.75	34.42	12.69	35.41



(a) (b)

Fig. 5 Nuclear island connected building of PFBR: (a) 3-D view and plan, (b) 3-D finite element model with 120,000 nodes and 725,000 degrees of freedom

2. Modeling of Structural Mass

The exact formulation of the dynamic response of a structure involves an infinite number of degrees of freedom. For most structures, however, the response may be adequately described via a limited number of discrete points (or joints) within the system. In the NICB of PFBR, the mass and mass moment of inertia are lumped at each floor level and at certain intermediate points, where the cross-section is changing. The mass and mass moment of inertia values are calculated about the mass centers. The mass at each floor node is calculated by summing the individual masses of slab, mass of equipment, etc. and 50% of the live load on slab area. The mass due to the self-weight of the sections of OCW, ICW, INTS, CV and raft are calculated between two connecting nodes and distributed equally to those nodes.

Table 1 shows the comparison of the frequencies and participation factors of the conventional beam model technique and beam model technique based on strain-energy equivalence with those of the 3-D finite element model. It can be seen that the beam model technique based on strain-energy equivalence calculates frequencies close to those of the 3-D finite element model and is generally recommended for the seismic analysis of reactor building. The same methodology has been extended to the advanced heavy water reactor (AHWR) building, and analysis was performed by using the models shown in Figure 6. Such approaches are amenable to the structural systems founded on independent foundations and not connected to each other in the superstructure. Figure 7 shows the development of the mass participation across different modes.

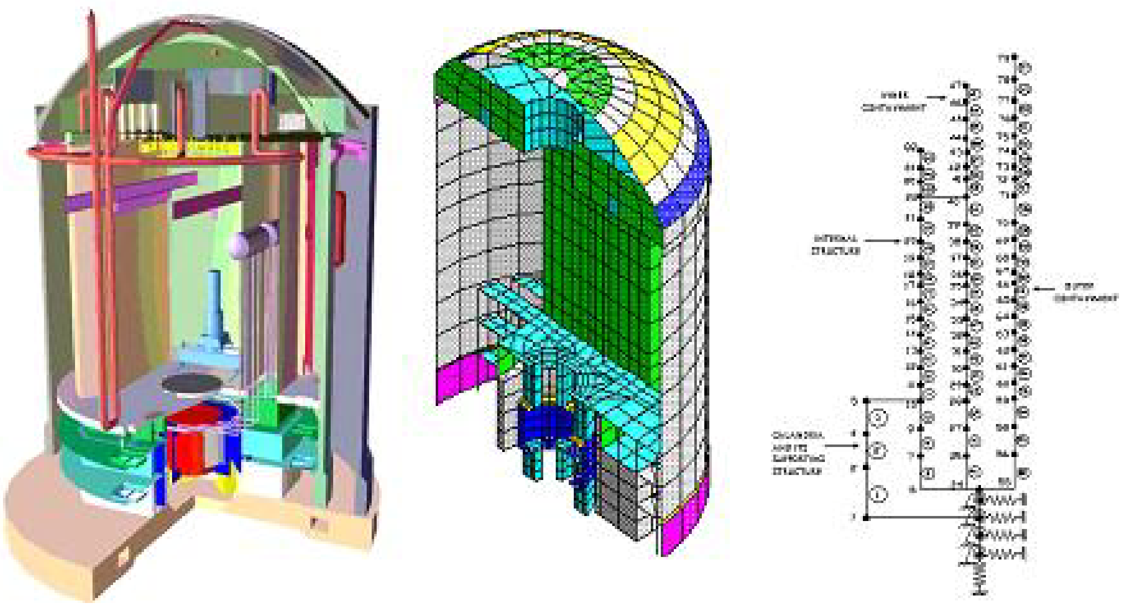


Fig. 6 AHWR containment structure: 3-D model and beam model

3. Soil-Structure Interaction (SSI)

When a structure vibrates under the action of an earthquake, the ground has an effect on the response of the structure, and at the same time the structure has an influence on the ground on which the structure is supported. The structure and ground interact with other during the earthquake. This phenomenon is referred to as soil-structure interaction. This may be separated into two types: kinematic interaction and inertial interaction. The kinematic interaction is the phenomenon that the rigid foundation constrains and averages the ground motion when seismic waves impinge on the foundation. The inertial interaction is the phenomenon that the inertial forces generated in the structure give rise to a new ground motion in the soil, when those forces are transmitted to the ground.

The soil-structure interaction effects are significant not only in evaluating the seismic response of structures but also in the assessment of structural safety against earthquakes. In the analysis of a soil-structure system, one is obliged to introduce many simplifications, idealizations, and/or assumptions not only in making the mathematical models of structures but also in their numerical evaluation. Most of these assumptions are concerned with soil because of the uncertainty of its properties as listed in Table 2.

While a variety of computational procedures to analyze the impedance functions and foundation input motions are available, an appropriate procedure can be chosen according to the purpose. The analysis procedures are based on using the available numerical evaluation procedures after suitable approximations or discretizations are introduced. A classification of these procedures is given in Table 4.

Table 2: Assumptions in Making Mathematical Model and Numerical Calculations

Issue	**Assumed Items**
Soil	• Idealization of soil medium • Homogeneous or horizontal stratum • Type of damping • Soil constraints
Interface	• Perfect bonding
Numerical Calculations	• 2-D, pseudo 3-D analyses • Discretization of soil medium or interface • Artificial boundary when FEM is used • Equivalent linearization of non-linear soil

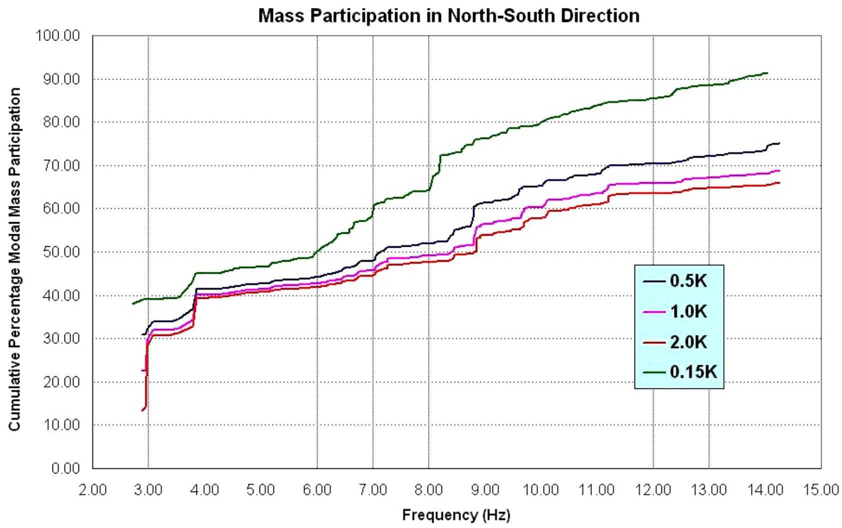


Fig. 7 Mass participation in the North direction for various values of sub-grade reaction

Table 3: Results of Frequency Analysis with 1.0 K Sub-grade Stiffness

S. No.	North-South Direction		East-West Direction		Vertical Direction	
	Frequency (Hz)	% Modal Mass	Frequency (Hz)	% Modal Mass	Frequency (Hz)	% Modal Mass
1	2.92	22.48	2.95	2.30	6.09	1.00
2	2.98	6.96	3.12	14.71	7.33	2.10
3	3.12	3.15	3.47	14.53	7.71	1.43

Table 4: Classification of Analysis Procedures (Soil-Structure Interaction)

Analysis Procedures	**Analytical**	• Exact
	Discrete Methods	• Finite element method • Finite difference method • Lumped mass model
	Others	• Baranov Novak method

A rational evaluation of soil-structure interaction effects during the postulated earthquake events is of prime importance in various analyses of NPPs. The soil-structure interaction can alter the frequencies of vibration of the structure and it can also affect the stresses and displacements in various components of the structure.

For rigid foundations where the super-structure is idealized as a stick model and the base foundation is represented as a single lumped-mass parameter system, the spring and damping coefficients obtained via impedance-function formulations and available in ASCE 4-1998 standard (ASCE, 2000) are used for representing the translational and rotational springs.

For distributed finite element models like the NICB structure, to simulate soil-structure interaction in the domain of dynamic loading, the base raft is incorporated in the global finite element model by using an assemblage of shell elements that interacts with the foundation base medium at all points of contact. In this case, the extension of the above method for raft foundation, as detailed in Arya et al. (1979), is adopted.

The vertical and horizontal springs based on impedance-function formulations are idealized at all nodes of raft. The vertical springs are distributed in plan and those resist the rocking motions about the N-S and E-W axes besides offering vertical stiffness. The horizontal springs resist the torsional motion of the structure besides offering horizontal stiffness. For idealizing these tension-compression springs, a spar element is used, which is a three-dimensional, uniaxial, tension-compression element with three degrees of freedom at each node. Damping is specified for every discrete nodal spring in the form of damping expressed as a percentage of critical damping.

4. Modeling of Systems and Components

For the seismic analysis of piping and equipments, generally finite element method is used. In this method, the stiffness, mass and damping are modeled appropriately and one of the following techniques is adopted.

4.1 Rigid Body Model

For this model, the item itself is assumed rigid (i.e., the fundamental frequency is assumed to be larger than the typically accepted limit of 30 Hz). The model is typically represented as a rigid body with attachment at the support points represented by springs or stiffness/flexibility matrices. The response of the item then would be by rocking or translational modes of vibration at the support points. Typical valves, pumps, motors, fans, and some heat exchangers fall in this category.

4.2 Single Mass Model

In this model, the total mass is assumed to be lumped at a single point, with composite stiffness restraining the mass represented as a single element. More than one degree of freedom may be permitted. In general, this modeling is considered as an alternative to the above method and is applied to the same type of systems.

4.3 Beam Model or One-Dimensional Finite Element Model

This modeling is typically applied to beams, columns, frames, ducts, cable trays, conduits, tanks, cabinets, storage racks, pressure vessels and heat exchangers, and is expressed as a continuous or one-dimensional finite element in a two- or three-dimensional space. The masses are represented by lumped parameters, which develop a diagonalized elemental mass matrix, or by means of consistent mass matrices, which have the same off-diagonal form as the elemental stiffness or flexibility matrices.

4.4 Plate/Shell or Two-Dimensional Finite Element

This type of modeling is adopted for those items whose primary mode of failure is via biaxial bending stress, plane stress or plane strain. Typically included in this category are cabinets, tanks, pressure vessels, and heat exchangers whose shells support significant out-of-plane loads, which would tend to excite shell or local modes of vibration.

4.5 Beam Model Based on Energy of Plate/Shell Finite Element

For the equipments, which have sections of irregular shapes, beam models of the equipments are generated by using energy equivalence between the plate/shell finite element and beam models.

4.6 Three-Dimensional Finite Element

This type of modeling is expensive and is thus preferable for local analyses to obtain correct stress picture at openings, nozzle junctions, etc.

4.7 Piping Models

Straight pipe element and/or pipe bends are used for modeling piping and supports, valves, etc., which are modeled with the above methods.

5. Supports for Piping Systems

Piping systems are supported on conventional supports, such as spring hangers, restraints, guides, and seismic supports called snubbers.

5.1 Spring Hangers

A spring hanger, as shown in Figure 8(a), is used for the piping carrying high-temperature fluid/steam in order to enable a free (axial and lateral) thermal expansion of the piping.

5.2 Rigid Restraints

A rigid restraint, as shown in Figure 8(b), is used where no thermal expansion-related movement of the pipe/equipment is expected along the support direction. Dead weight, thermal loads and service loads can be supported by these restraints. In these types of supports, a limited amount of energy associated with the oscillatory motion is dissipated due to the rubbing or frictional movements at the hinge joints. The type of hinge joint dictates the actual amount of energy dissipation. The spherical ball and groove type of hinge joint is found to be more effective in dissipating the energy. However, the force-displacement characteristics are highly nonlinear and the amount of energy dissipation is very small.

5.3 Pipe Guides

Pipe guides and sliding supports, as shown in Figure 9, were originally used for the piping/equipment to allow free thermal expansion movement. Recently, it has been found that these supports have an inherent characteristic to absorb energy due to the oscillatory motion. In order to have free thermal expansion, the coefficient of friction between the pipe and the support should be small and should be maintained through out the service of the piping system. To maintain a constant coefficient of friction, there should not be any corrosion on the surface of the pipe or the support. To avoid corrosion problems, materials, such as Teflon, Ferro asbestos sheets, are used. A high coefficient of friction may be good for high-energy dissipation, but on the contrary, it will result in more thermal stresses in the piping/ equipment. Due to this problem, materials with low coefficients of friction are being used.

5.4 Snubbers

Snubbers, which are generally called seismic anchors, are of two types—mechanical snubbers and hydraulic snubbers.

Mechanical Snubber: A mechanical snubber, as shown in Figure 10, consists of a ball screw that converts the linear motion of piping/equipment into the rotary motion of the flywheel attached to the end of the ball screw shaft. The flywheel additionally has a breaking mechanism, which restrains the movement of the piping/equipment above certain earthquake acceleration level but allows free movement under normal operation. Snubbers do not take any sustained loads.

Hydraulic Snubber: A hydraulic snubber consists of an orifice, a moving piston and a cylindrical casing filled with operating oil. The piston is connected to the piping/equipment through the connecting rod and cylinder is connected to the building structure. In the case of thermal expansion movement, which is slow and gradual, the operating oil moves through the orifice, enabling the piston to move almost with no resistance from the hydraulic pressure. On the other hand, when a rapid seismic motion occurs, the orifice is shut by the hydraulic pressure (as high resistance is offered by the orifice to the large flow rate of the oil required for the rapid movement of piston), preventing the flow of operating oil. This results in the suppression of piping/equipment movement.

5.5 Limitations of Conventional Support

The conventional supports except snubbers can act either as restraints or allow free motion and cannot thus serve both purposes of allowing free motion during the normal operations and restraining or energy dissipation during an earthquake. However, utilities have strong incentives to remove snubbers from operating NPPs and are avoided in new plants due to the following reasons:

a) It is expensive to maintain snubbers since they require periodic testing to ensure meeting stringent functionality specifications. On average, the maintenance cost of a single snubber is estimated at $2000 per year. For qualified snubbers, repairs or replacements could incur an additional cost.
b) The structure of snubber is complex; it provides less damping and is expensive. In addition to this, the mechanical snubber may pose locking problem and the hydraulic snubber, if used, may leak and may not work when required.
c) Snubbers congest the working space and thus impede in service inspection.
d) An inadvertent snubber lock-up in a mechanical snubber can induce higher thermal stresses during normal operations, which is undesirable from the viewpoint of piping fatigue.

In order to overcome the above difficulties, modern damping devices called seismic response control devices have been developed fulfilling the following requirements:

- high-damping ability for any dynamic impact (e.g., due to vibration, shock, and seismic effects);
- long service life without repairing;

- radioactive and thermal resistance;
- negligible reaction force to the system under thermal expansion;
- lack of time delay under dynamic loads;
- ability to sustain overloading without losing functionality and integrity;
- ability to regulate damping necessary for the system; and
- low primary, inspection and maintenance cost.

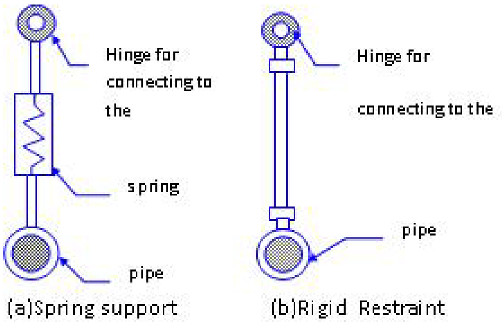


Fig. 8 Spring and rigid restraints

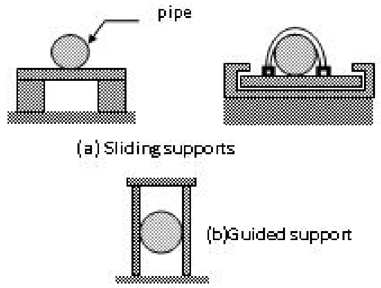


Fig. 9 Pipe guides

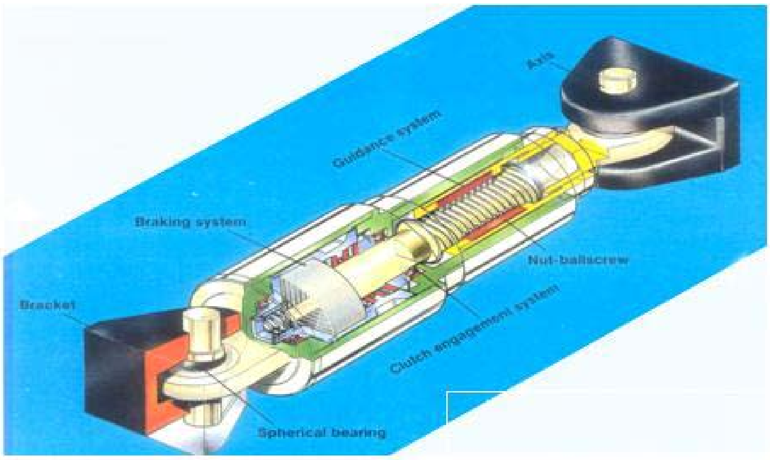


Fig. 10 Mechanical snubber

6. Structure-Equipment Interaction

The internal structure of a reactor building supports equipments and piping systems. The equipments may interact with the structure during an earthquake. This results in variations in the uncoupled response, wherein the uncoupled response is calculated for the equipments and structure separately. The best way of accounting for the interaction effects of the structure and equipments is by coupling those together and analyzing for the given earthquake load. However, due to practical reasons, it is not preferred. In fact, the equipments that significantly affect the uncoupled natural frequencies of the structure/equipments are identified by using the decoupling criteria (ASCE, 2000; USNRC, 1989) as given below:

- Decoupling can be done for any R_f, if R_m < 0.01, where R_f is the ratio of the frequency or modal frequency of the uncoupled equipment to that of the uncoupled structure and R_m is the ratio of mass or modal mass of the uncoupled equipment to that of the uncoupled structure. Dominant modes (with > 20% mass participation) only are considered for calculating the frequency and mass ratios.
- If $0.01 \leq R_m \leq 0.1$, decoupling can be done, provided $0.8 \geq R_f \geq 1.25$.
- If $R_m > 0.1$, an approximate model of the secondary system (e.g., equipment) should be included in the primary system (i.e., the supporting structure).
- For rigid equipment whose frequency is more than 33 Hz, only the mass of the equipment should be included.

This criterion is also represented graphically in Figure 11. If the frequency and mass ratio fall in the region “coupling is required”, the corresponding equipment is coupled with reactor building and seismic analysis is performed.

The above criterion is not straightforward for applying to the complex structures, such as reactor containment structure. Modifications have been suggested (Reddy et al., 1994) that make the criterion applicable to the complex structures**.** The above criterion is also not applicable to the multi-connected equipments. A new criterion (Reddy et al., 1998) has been developed that can be used for checking the decoupling requirements of multi-connected equipments.

7. Damping

The damping values that can be used for SSCs, made of different materials and by using different construction and fabrication methods, are continuously updated with gain in knowledge from experiments on SSCs and the performance of SSCs under actual earthquakes. This has evolved following extensive studies and the current USNRC regulatory position as indicated in Table 5. A comparison of the old and new damping values for certain SSCs is indicated in this table. Additional details are available in USNRC regulatory guide 1.61 (USNRC, 2007b).

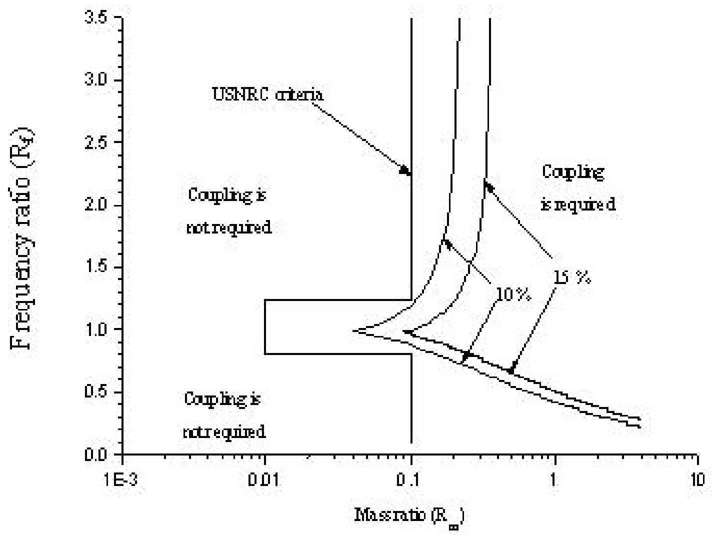


Fig. 11 Decoupling criteria for the equipment connected to the structure at single location

Table 5: Damping Values for Various Structures in Percentage of Critical Damping (USNRC, 2007b)

Structure Type	OBE Old	OBE New	SSE Old	SSE New
Pipe Diameter > 12”	2	3	3 (for OBE > 1/3 SSE)	4
Pipe Diameter < 12”	1		2	
Welded Steel Structure	2	3	4	4
Bolted Steel Structure	4	5	7	7
Pre-stressed Concrete	2	3	5	5
RCC	4	4	7	7
Reinforced Masonry	—	4	—	7

7.1 Piping

It is evident that in the case of piping systems, constant damping values presently prescribed by USNRC are higher than the earlier values for both response spectrum and time history analyses. As an alternative, for response spectrum analysis the envelope of the SSE or OBE response spectra at all support points and the frequency-dependent damping values, as shown in Figure 12, are accepted subject to the following restrictions:

a. If the damping values specified in USNRC regulatory guide 1.61 (USNRC, 2007b) are to be used for equipments other than piping, they should be used consistently.
b. The use of the specified damping values is limited to response spectral analyses.
c. When used for the reconciliation or support optimization of the existing designs, the effects of increased motion on existing clearances and online mounted equipments should be checked.
d. The frequency-dependent damping is not appropriate for analyzing the dynamic response of piping, while using the supports designed to dissipate energy by yielding.
e. The frequency-dependent damping is not applicable to the piping in which stress-corrosion cracking has occurred, unless a case-specific evaluation is provided, reviewed, and found acceptable by the NRC staff.

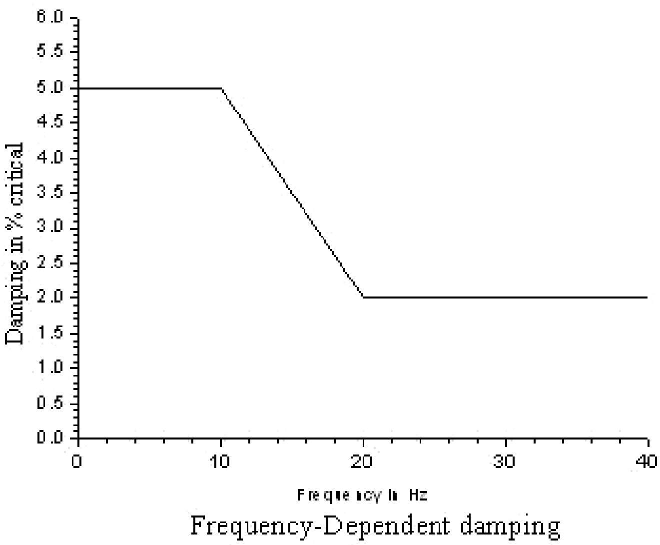


Fig. 12 Variation of damping with system frequency

7.2 Damping in Soil

The ASCE 4-1998 standard (ASCE, 2000) procedures for the evaluation of soil damping are adopted. For stick models, the damping of 7% is specified for the rocking mode. In the case of finite element models, the foundation stiffness is in a distributed form of vertical springs at each node of the base raft. These vertical springs resist the rocking motion. For the rocking mode, damping for the vertical springs is taken as 7%. The rocking mode of motion about the horizontal axis is excited due to the horizontal excitation. Hence, under the N-S and E-W excitations, damping for the vertical springs is specified as 7%.

Damping is evaluated by using the ASCE 4-1998 standard (ASCE, 2000) recommendations for the values over 30% in the vertical direction. However, this is restricted to 30% in the vertical direction. Though these provisions for damping are for a stick model, the same can be used for an individual vertical spring in the finite element model. The damping for a single spring-mass system based on $\left[K\right]$ and $\left[M\right]$ and given by impedance functions is adopted for the elemental springs used in the finite element analysis. These vertical springs do not come under the rocking mode under the vertical excitation. Hence, the damping is specified as 30% under the vertical excitation.

COMPUTATION OF RESPONSE

There are four popular methods, which can be used for the determination of seismic response:

(a) time-history method:
- direct step-by-step integration technique,
- modal superposition technique;

(b) response spectrum method;

(c) complex frequency response method; and
(d) equivalent static method.

In the above, method (c) deals with the frequency-domain analysis. This requires the power spectral density function (PSDF) of the ground motion to be specified. There are no well-defined and acceptable methods to obtain this. Hence, this method is not generally used. Method (d) can be adopted, where the seismic criteria will not control the design. Hence, out of these methods, methods (a) and (b) are most often used in the analysis of NPP systems. However, method (a) is used for response calculation as well as for floor response spectra generation, and method (b) is used only for response calculation. The floor response spectra generated are used for the design of equipment and piping after peak broadening and smoothening.

1. Number of Modes Considered in Modal Superposition Method or Response Spectrum Method

The system response evaluated is the combination of responses obtained in different modes. A sufficient number of modes should be selected to evaluate accurate response of the system. The number of modes included in the analysis should be sufficient to ensure that the inclusion of all remaining modes does not result in more than 10% increase in the total response of interest. However, the following two criteria are adopted, while choosing the minimum number of modes:

i. The number of modes extracted is such that the highest mode corresponds to a frequency greater than or equal to 33 Hz.
ii. The number of modes extracted is such that the cumulative modal mass is more than 90% in each of the three directions.

2. Combination of Modal Responses

Following modal combination rules have been in vogue as per the USNRC regulatory guide 1.92 (USNRC, 1976):

i. SRSS method,
ii. 10% method,
iii. double sum method, and
iv. grouping method.

For the combination of spatial components, procedures like SRSS combination and 100-40-40 method have been proposed and are in vogue. The procedures to evaluate the rigid-body response (or, the missing mass effect) are also adopted in the designs of all SSCs in NPPs. The current procedures formulated by AERB for Indian plants have adopted this criterion.

USNRC regulatory guide 1.92 (USNRC, 2006) has now adopted the following approaches, which could become the criteria adopted internationally.

i. SRSS method, and
ii. general modal combination rules:
   a) Rosenblueth correlation coefficient,
   b) Der Kiureghian correlation coefficient.

2.1 SRSS Rule for Well-Separated Modes

In a response spectrum-based modal dynamic analysis, if the modes are not closely spaced (two consecutive modes are defined as closely spaced if their frequencies differ from each other by 10% or less of the lower frequency), the representative maximum value of the particular response of interest for design should be obtained by taking the square root of the sum of the squares (SRSS) of the modal maxima of the same response. Mathematically, this can be expressed as

$$R = \left[\sum_{i=1}^{n} R_i^2 \right]^{1/2} \tag{2}$$

where R is the representative maximum value of the particular response of a given element to a given component of the earthquake ground motion, R_i is the peak value of the response of the element due to the ith mode, and n is the number of significant modes considered in the modal response combination.

USNRC regulatory guide 1.92 (USNRC, 2006) defines closely spaced frequencies as a function of critical damping ratio:

- For critical damping ratios ≤ 2%, modes are considered closely spaced if the frequencies are within 10% of each other (i.e., for $f_i < f_j$, $f_j \leq 1.1\ f_i$).
- For critical damping ratios > 2%, modes are considered closely spaced if the frequencies are within five times the critical damping ratio of each other (i.e., for $f_i < f_j$ and 5% damping, $f_j \leq 1.25\ f_i$; for $f_i < f_j$ and 10% damping, $f_j \leq 1.5\ f_i$).

2.2 General Modal Combination Rule (Including Closely Spaced Modes)

A general modal combination rule considering closely spaced and well separated modes may be described as follows:

$$R = \left[\sum_{i=1}^{n} \sum_{j=1}^{n} \varepsilon_{ij} R_i R_j \right]^{1/2} \tag{3}$$

On substituting $\varepsilon_{ij} = 1.0$ for $i = j$ and $\varepsilon_{ij} = 0.0$ for $i \neq j$, this equation reduces to the SRSS combination rule. If the modes are closely spaced, SRSS rule is not applicable and one of the methods described below should be used.

Rosenblueth Correlation Coefficient: Rosenblueth has evolved following formula, based on the random vibration approach, for the representative maximum value, with coefficient ε_{ij} expressed as a function of modal frequencies and modal damping and the duration of strong motion t_d :

$$R = \left[\sum_{k=1}^{N} \sum_{s=1}^{N} \left| R_k R_s \right| \varepsilon_{ks} \right]^{1/2} \tag{4}$$

where

$$\varepsilon_{ks} = \left[1 + \left\{ \frac{(\omega'_k - \omega')}{\xi'_k \omega_k + \xi'_s \omega_s} \right\}^2 \right]^{-1} \tag{5}$$

with

$$\omega'_k = \omega_k \sqrt{1 - \xi_k^2} \tag{6}$$

$$\xi'_k = \xi_k + \frac{2}{t_d\ \omega_k} \tag{7}$$

and ω_k and ξ_k being the modal frequency and damping ratio, respectively, in the k th mode.

Der Kiureghian Correlation Coefficient: This method does not take into account the duration of the earthquake ground motion. It assumes the earthquake loading to be a white noise with infinite duration and the representative maximum value is expressed as

$$R = \left[\sum_{k=1}^{N} \sum_{s=1}^{N} R_k R_s \varepsilon_{ks} \right]^{1/2} \tag{8}$$

with

$$\varepsilon_{ks} = \frac{(\omega_k + \omega_s)^2 \xi^2}{(\omega_k - \omega_s)^2 + (\omega_k + \omega_s)^2 \xi^2} \tag{9}$$

for constant damping ratios and

$$\varepsilon_{ks} = \frac{2\sqrt{\xi_k \xi_s} \left[(\omega_k + \omega_s)^2 (\xi_k + \xi_j) + (\omega_k - \omega_s)^2\ (\xi_k - \xi_j) \right]}{4(\omega_k^2 - \omega_s^2) + (\omega_k + \omega_s)^2 (\xi_k + \xi_j)^2} \tag{10}$$

for different damping ratios.

SEISMIC DESIGN OF SYSTEMS AND COMPONENTS

Generally various components and systems in an NPP are supported on the structure. Some of the large-size components may influence the behavior of structures supporting these components, and this influence is qualitatively checked by using the decoupling criterion indicated above as per the ASCE/ ASME specifications. This criterion is based on the frequency and mass ratios of the uncoupled component which determine whether the component will alter the vibration characteristics of the structure or not. If it is so, the coupled models of structures and components are generated and analyzed. The systems, such as piping, instrumentation and control, may not alter the structural vibration characteristics because those are light in nature. However, for the design of such systems and components, input motions are generated at the support locations in the structures. These motions become inputs for the qualification of such systems. These input motions are very easy to generate in the beam models, but in the case of 3-D models where there will be a large number of nodes at each level, the choice for the location of points for the generation of floor response spectra (FRS) is critical. One rational approach is to generate FRS at the CG of each level and to use those for the design of components and systems supported at that level. It is also essential to select appropriate points on the floor critical for the equipment design including supports.

FLOOR RESPONSE SPECTRA GENERATION

Generally, time-history methods are used for generating FRS from floor time histories because of their simplicity and reliability. For a conservative design of SSCs, a direct method, which is simple and less time consuming, may be adopted.

1. Direct Method: Time History Analysis

a) For the design basis ground motion, time history analysis is performed by using a mathematical model of the structure, which could be a beam or 3-D FE model, and floor time histories are generated.

b) FRS are generated by using the floor time histories. While generating FRS, the spectrum ordinates are computed at sufficiently small intervals to produce accurate response spectra including significant peaks normally expected at the natural frequencies of the structure. One acceptable interval of frequencies is listed in Table 6, which is as per ASCE 4-1998 standard (ASCE, 2000). Figure 13 shows the FRS at various levels generated for an AHWR building.

Table 6: Frequency Steps for FRS Generation

Frequency Range (Hz)	Increment (Hz)
0.5–3.0	0.10
3.0–3.6	0.15
3.6–5.0	0.20
5.0–8.0	0.25
8.0–15.0	0.50
15.0–18.0	1.0
18.0–22.0	2.0
22.0–34.0	3.0

2. Stochastic Analysis

The various steps involved in a stochastic method are given below:

a) The design basis ground motion, denoted by design basis Power Spectral Density Function (PSDF), is generated.

b) A mathematical model of the structure is generated. The model could be a beam or 3-D FEM model.

c) The floor PSDF is generated from the design basis PSDF by using structural analysis.

d) FRS are now generated from the floor PSDF at the frequency interval explained above.

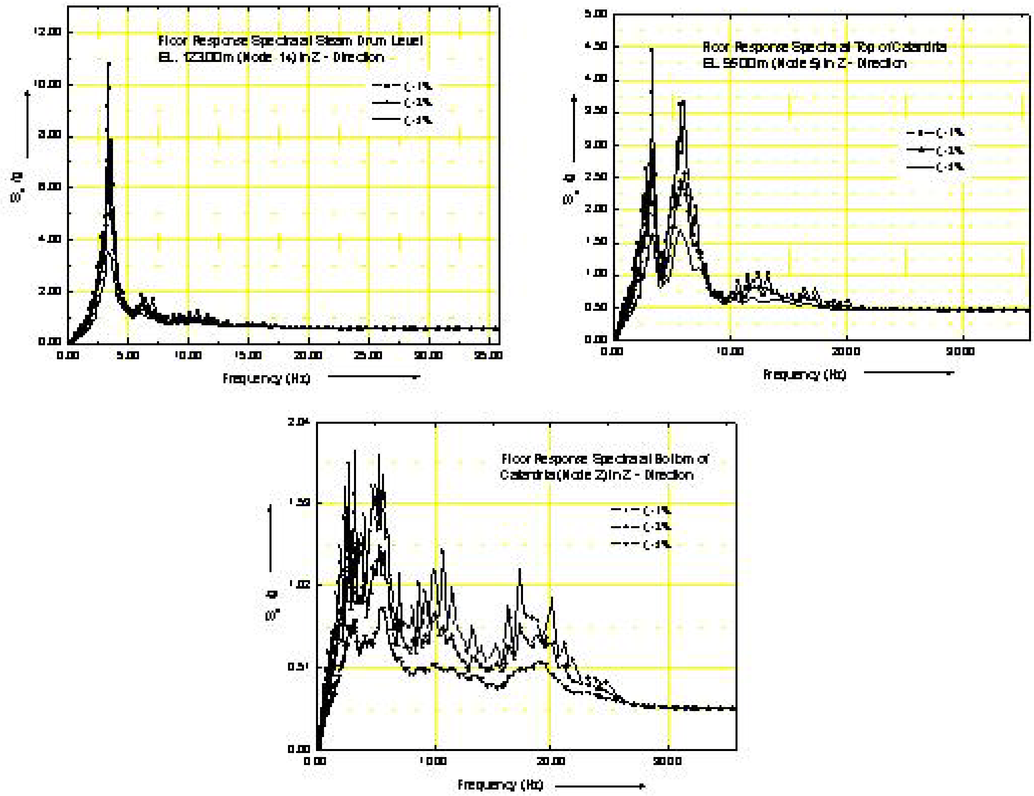


Fig. 13 Floor response spectra at various floor levels of the AHWR building

3. Simplified Analysis

The various steps involved in a simplified analysis are given below:

(a) The design basis ground motion, denoted by design basis response spectrum as shown in Figure 14(b) and compatible time history as shown in Figure 14(c), is generated for the given structural damping.

(b) A mathematical model of the structure as shown in Figure 14(a) is generated. This could be a beam or 3-D FEM model.

(c) FRS are generated based on the procedure outlined below:

$$S_{Ei} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{\left[1-\left(\frac{\omega_A}{\omega_{Bi}}\right)^2\right]^2 + 4\left(h_A + h_{Bi}\right)^2\left(\frac{\omega_A}{\omega_{Bi}}\right)^2}}\sqrt{\left[\left(\frac{\omega_A}{\omega_{Bi}}\right)^2 S\left(\omega_{Bi}, h_{Bi}\right)\right]^2 + S^2\left(\omega_A, h_A\right)} \tag{11}$$

$$S_B = \sqrt{\sum_i \left({}_\beta U_i S_{Ei}\right)^2} \tag{12}$$

where

S_E is the floor response spectrum taking into account every evaluated mode of the structure;

${}_\beta U_i$ is the ith-mode excitation function value of the floor and is equal to the product of modal participation factor and floor mode shape in the ith mode;

S_{Ei} is the maximum value of the absolute acceleration response of the system and components under the ith-mode acceleration of the structure;

h_A is the damping factor of the systems and components;

T_A is the natural period of the system and components;

h_{Bi} is the damping factor of the structure;

T_{Bi} is the natural period of the structure;

$S(T_{Bi}, h_{Bi})$ is the standard design ground spectrum corresponding to T_{Bi} and h_{Bi} of the structure; and $S(T_A, h_A)$ is the standard design ground spectrum corresponding to T_A and h_A of the structure.

It may be noted that the mass m_A of the system and components needs to be sufficiently smaller than the mass m_{Bi} of the structure.

At least 10% broadening of the floor response spectrum needs to be taken into account to cope up with the uncertainty in the frequency analysis of SSCs.

By using the above procedure, FRS at the top of the building are generated and compared with the time history analysis results as shown in Figure 14(d). It may be seen that the spectra generated by using the simplified method are conservative compared to those generated by using the time history analysis.

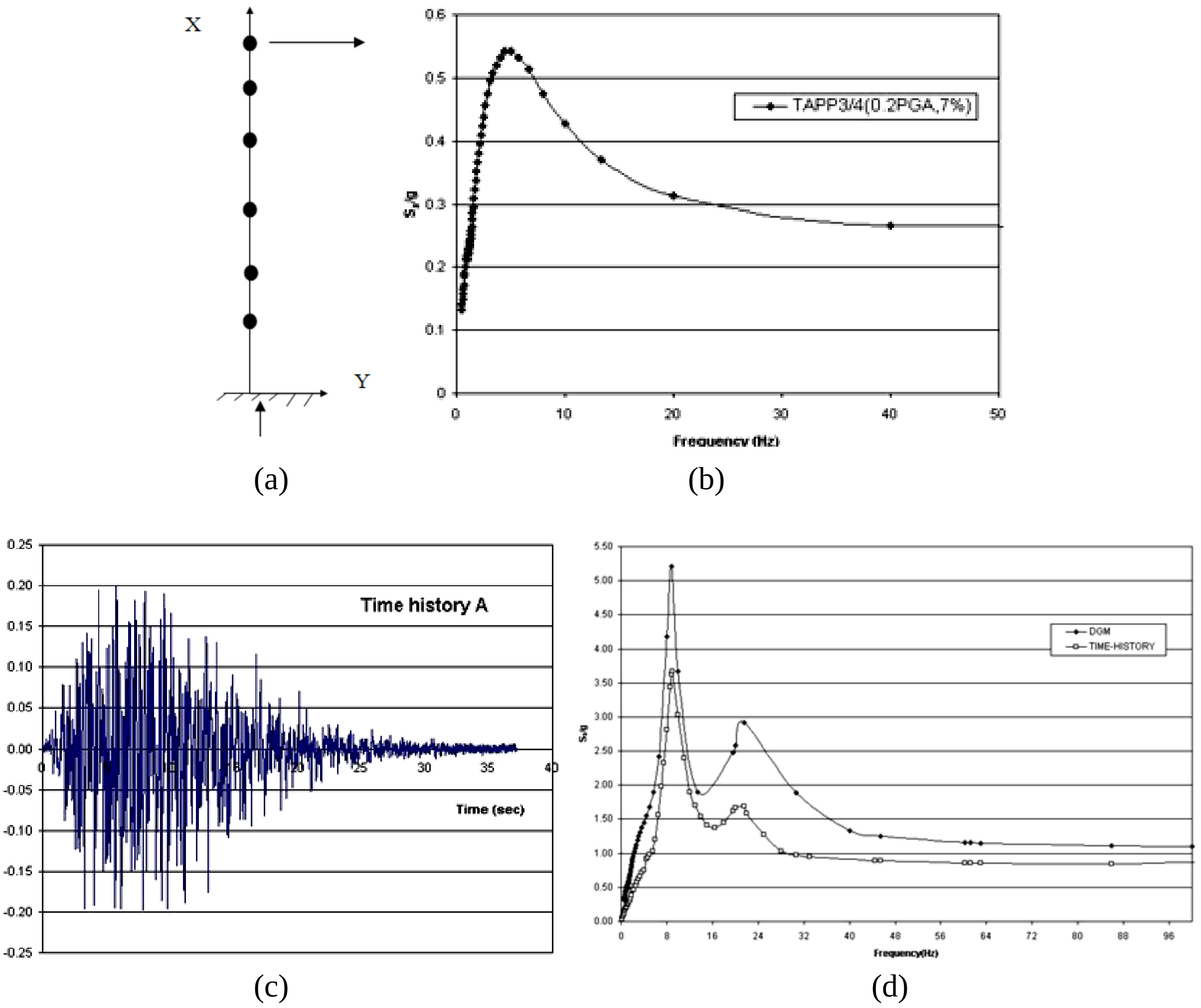


Fig. 14 (a) Beam model of typical cantilever structure; (b) Typical design spectrum (0.2*g* PGA, 7% damping); (c) Time history compatible with the given spectra; (d) FRS at the top of the building

SEISMIC RE-QUALIFICATION OF EXISTING NPP STRUCTURES, EQUIPMENT AND PIPING SYSTEMS

The objective of the seismic review of an existing nuclear safety-related facility is its evaluation against the perceived seismic hazard by using the current design practice. The methodology of seismic design of structures, equipment and piping systems has evolved over a number of years, and several important nuclear safety-related facilities were designed and built according to the standards prevailing at the time of their construction. These facilities may not satisfy the requirements which are related to the current design criteria, as explained above, for NPP systems for their protection against the effects of seismic hazard. Therefore, it becomes necessary to reassess the capability of the older NPP systems to withstand the effects of earthquake loads in line with the present statutory requirements.

Broadly, the seismic review methodology has four steps, namely,

(i) determination of an earthquake level for the seismic re-assessment, which is generally higher than the one for which the facility had been originally designed;
(ii) identification of the systems for which the seismic re-assessment is to be carried out;
(iii) assessment of the seismic capacity of the NPP systems with respect to the derived higher earthquake load as per the current design practice; and
(iv) wherever necessary, upgradation of the structures by using the information obtained from the seismic re-qualification.

The seismic capacity of an NPP system is the ground acceleration up to which the system would have the ability to sustain its effects and would continue to perform its intended functions. The seismic capacity can be assessed by detailed analysis and design that are backed by experience (INSAG, 1995). However, the re-qualification methodology for systems involves

(i) analyzing the systems for the derived higher level of ground motion and determining design forces, and
(ii) re-evaluating the design forces, while considering the inelastic energy absorption characteristics of the systems by adopting suitable ductility factor and a higher value of damping (as in Table 7), for the re-qualification of the systems in the existing plants (INSAG, 1995).

Table 7: Damping Values (as Percentages of Critical Damping) for Seismic Re-qualification

System	Damping
Reinforced Concrete Structures	10
Steel Frame Structures	15
Welded Assemblies	7
Bolted and Riveted Assemblies	15
Cable Trays	10
Heat Exchangers, Pumps and Tanks	7
Piping	5

Nearly all the systems used in NPPs and made of ductile material exhibit some ductility before failure. The easiest way to account for the inelastic absorption capability in civil structures is to multiply the computed seismic stresses by a reduction factor of 0.8. However, sometimes a detailed non-linear analysis is performed to justify lower values. In the case of piping, the allowable stress value of $4.5\,S_m$ for earthquake loads is permitted. The S_m value is taken as the minimum of two-third of yield stress or one-third of ultimate stress. The plant walk-down criteria for evaluating seismic margin are also used. While re-evaluating stress in the pipe support, the allowable stress for structural steel may be considered as 1.3 times the yield stress.

By using the above-outlined procedure, Madras atomic power plant and Dhruva research reactor have been requalified for the present seismic design requirements.

STANDARDIZATION AND RETROFITTING

One of the contributors in increasing the cost of an NPP is seismic design. A cost-effective seismic design of NPP is possible, if the seismic design is standardized. This can be achieved by using passive seismic response control devices, such as isolators (Varma el al., 2002), energy absorbers of elasto-plastic type, lead-extrusion type (Parulekar et al., 2004), or friction type (Reddy et al., 1999). A substantial progress has been made in the design and testing of isolators, elasto-plastic dampers and lead-extrusion dampers, shown respectively in Figures 15, 16 and 17. These devices can also be used for the purpose of retrofitting of existing NPP systems. An analysis of NPP systems supported on the above devices by using direct and linearization techniques (Reddy et al., 1999) can be performed.

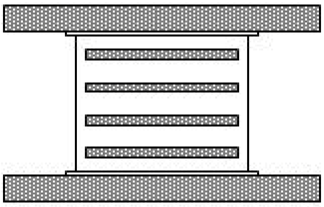


Fig. 15 Laminated rubber bearing (test model)

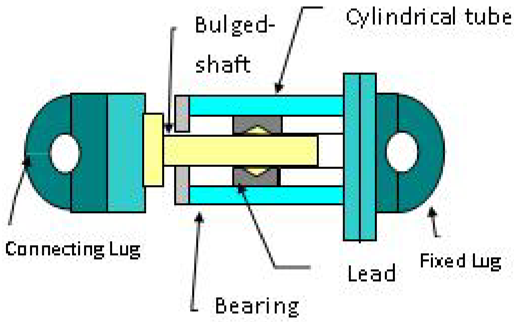


Fig. 16 Lead extrusion damper

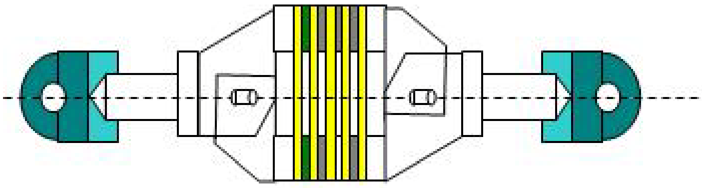


Fig. 17 Elasto-plastic damper (EPD)

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