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**MAXIMUM PERMISSIBLE SLOPE FOR
INTERLOCKING CONCRETE BLOCK PAVING FOR
RESIDENTIAL ROADS**

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Master of Engineering in Highway and Traffic Engineering

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

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DECLARATION

I affirm that this dissertation is my original work and does not incorporate, without proper acknowledgment, any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma at any other university or institution. To the best of my knowledge, it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person, except where such references are clearly cited in the text.

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Name of Supervisor: Prof. W. K. Mamperachchi

Signature of the Supervisor:

Date: 28/07/2025

ABSTRACT

Concrete Block Paving (CBP) is a popular surfacing method currently used for rural roads in Sri Lanka, primarily due to its cost-effectiveness, ease of construction, and suitability for medium- to low-traffic conditions. Nowadays, CBP is applied not only on flat terrains but also on steep slopes. Determining the maximum permissible slope for block paving is critical to ensuring the durability, stability, and functionality of the pavement system. Empirical studies and field observations show that gradients exceeding permissible limits can lead to problems such as erosion, block displacement, and reduced skid resistance, especially over unsealed subgrades.

While several studies have examined the influence of block shape, laying pattern, laying angle, joint width, and block thickness on CBP performance in flat terrain, these factors may behave differently on sloped surfaces due to additional forces acting on the blocks. Therefore, the aim of this research is to investigate the maximum permissible slope for CBP under medium- to low-traffic conditions.

As part of the study, a 90-meter road segment with slopes ranging from 0° to 10° was constructed. Paving was done at 10-meter intervals using Uni-style blocks, while varying the block patterns, laying angles, and cross beam intervals. Field data were used to calculate relative vertical deflections. A Finite Element Model (FEM) was also developed in ANSYS software to simulate the behavior of the pavement system by varying slope, laying pattern, laying angle, and cross beam spacing.

The results indicate that as slope increases, horizontal deflection tends to increase while vertical deflection decreases. However, when cross beams are placed at optimal intervals, both horizontal and vertical deflections become negligible. Under such conditions, the effects of slope, laying pattern, and laying angle on pavement performance are significantly reduced, making CBP a viable option for rural roads even on sloped terrains.

Keywords: Concrete Block Paving (CBP), Finite-element model (FEM), uni style block pattern, Herring bond pattern.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction.....	1
1.1. Background.....	1
1.2. Problem Statement	2
2. Objectives	4
3. Literature Review	5
3.1. Effect of laying pattern.....	5
3.2. Effect of Block shape	7
3.3. Effect of laying angle	8
3.4. Effect of joint width	9
3.5. Effect of paver thickness	9
3.6. Effect of degree of the slope	10
3.7. Effect of cross beams	10
4. Methodology.....	11
4.1. Monitoring of existing block paved roads in sloped sections.....	11
4.2. Developing trail concrete block surface	14
4.3. Analysis of Field data.....	15
4.4. Finite Element modelling of CBP	16
4.5. ANSYS Workbench for finite Element model analysis	17
4.6. Validation of the ANSYS Finite Element model.....	20
5. Results and Analysis	23
5.1. Outcomes of developed trail Concrete block surface.....	23
5.2. Outcomes of FEM Model.....	26
5.3. Optimum spacing of cross beams	33
6. Conclusion	40
7. Limitations and Recommendations.....	42
8. References	44
9. Appendix	45

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Deformation and horizontal creep of CBP for sloping road section (Mudiyono, 2015).....	2
Figure 2: Loading positions vs vertical deflection(different laying patterns).....	5
Figure 3: Loading position vs H. deflection (Different laying patterns)	6
Figure 4: Horizontal force vs Horizontal creep to analyze the effect of laying pattern.....	6
Figure 5: Effect of block shapes on deflection	7
Figure 6: Loading point vs deflection (deflection profile).....	7
Figure 7: The effect of laying angle.....	8
Figure 8: Horizontal force vs Horizontal creep(effect of width of joints)	9
Figure 9: Horizontal force vs Horizontal creep (The effect of thickness of paving)...	9
Figure 10: The effect degree of slope	10
Figure 11: Sloping of anchor beams	10
Figure 12: 12° sloped block paved road.....	11
Figure 13: Common field practice of placing cross spacing	13
Figure 14: Standard method of placing cross beams	13
Figure 15: Block placing in trail section	14
Figure 16: Finished trial block paved road section.....	15
Figure 17: Identification of wheel path in completed trail road section	15
Figure 18: Surface level checking using Automatic level instrument	16
Figure 19: Mesh developed in ANSYS Workbench.....	17
Figure 20: Geometry developed with ANSYS Workbench.....	18
Figure 21: Load application as horizontal and vertical components	19
Figure 22: Deflection basin of FEM	20
Figure 23: Hinge formation by (Panda & Ghosh, 2002a).....	20
Figure 24: Hinge formation developed by ANSYS model	21
Figure 25: Deflection variation along diagonal.....	21
Figure 26: Verification of ANSYS FEM by (Gunatilake & Mampearachchi, 2019)..	22
Figure 27: Block surface without cross beam	26
Figure 28: Loading position vs v.Deflection in (different laying patterns)	28

Figure 29: Loading position vs H. Deflection (different laying patterns)	29
Figure 30: Block surface with cross beam	30
Figure 31: Vertical deflection vs degree of slope	31
Figure 32: Horizontal deflection vs degree of slope	31
Figure 33: Combined graph of Vertical deflection vs degree of slope	32
Figure 34: Combined graph of Horizontal deflection vs degree of slope	32
Figure 35: 4m road section developed with ANSYS Workbench	33
Figure 36: Analysis of 4m road section	34
Figure 37: Cross beam intervals vs vertical deflection for different degree of slopes	38
Figure 38: Cross beam intervals vs vertical deflection for different degree of slopes	39

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Description	Page
Table 1:	Existing Concrete Block paved sloped roads	12
Table 2:	Section wised block paved sections	14
Table 3:	Material properties for SAP FEM (Mampearachchi & Gunarathna, 2010) .	17
Table 4:	Deflection variation along diagonal	22
Table 5:	Relative deflection of wheel path.....	24
Table 6:	Average deflection of wheel path of road section	26
Table 7:	FEM model analysis results.....	27
Table 8:	Vertical deflection vs degree of slope (Without cross beams)	28
Table 9:	Horizontal deflection vs. degree of slope	29
Table 10:	FEM model analysis results.....	30
Table 11:	Vertical deflection graphs from 0^0 to 20^0	36
Table 12:	Horizontal deflection graphs from 0^0 to 20^0	37

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Description
CBP	Concrete Block Paving
FEM	Finite Element Method
CB	Cross beam