

# Numerical Investigation of Structural Behavior of Waffle Slab Buildings Under Multi-Load Conditions

K NIKHILESH<sup>1</sup>, KANDULA VAISHNAVI<sup>2</sup>, PEDDIPELLY RAKESH<sup>3</sup>, SIRICILLA AJAY<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Associate Professor, Department of Civil Engineering, Siddhartha Institute of Technology and Science Engineering (Autonomous), Narapally(V), Ghatkesar(M), Medchal(D), Telangana, India

<sup>2, 3, 4</sup> B. TECH, Department of Civil Engineering, Siddhartha Institute of Technology and Science Engineering (Autonomous), Narapally(V), Ghatkesar(M), Medchal(D), Telangana, India

*Abstract- Waffle slab systems are increasingly adopted in multi-storey buildings due to their ability to achieve longer spans, reduced self-weight, and enhanced architectural flexibility. This study presents a numerical investigation on the analysis and design of a G+4 reinforced concrete waffle slab building using STAAD.Pro software in accordance with Indian Standard codes. The structural model is developed by incorporating realistic geometric configurations, material properties, and boundary conditions. Dead loads, live loads, wind loads, and seismic loads are applied as per IS 456:2000, IS 875, and IS 1893 provisions. Finite element analysis is carried out to evaluate critical structural responses such as deflection, shear force, bending moment, axial force, plate stress, and beam stress. The design of slabs, beams, columns, and foundations is performed using the limit state method, and the adequacy of structural elements is verified against strength and serviceability requirements. The results demonstrate that waffle slab systems provide efficient load distribution, controlled deflections, and economical reinforcement requirements when compared to conventional slab systems. The study confirms that the proposed waffle slab structure is safe, stable, and suitable for medium-rise buildings in seismic regions*

**Keywords:** *Generating Structural Framing Plan, Getting Model, Analysis of Structure, Design of Structure*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The construction industry has witnessed rapid urbanization and vertical expansion due to increasing population density and limited land availability in metropolitan regions. As cities expand vertically, the demand for structurally efficient, economical, and aesthetically appealing floor systems has significantly increased. Among various reinforced

concrete floor systems, waffle slab construction has emerged as an innovative solution for multi-storey

buildings requiring longer spans and reduced structural weight. A waffle slab is a two-way ribbed slab system in which concrete below the neutral axis is removed in a systematic grid pattern, forming ribs in both directions. This configuration reduces self-weight while maintaining high stiffness and load-carrying capacity. The present study focuses on the numerical investigation of the structural behavior of a G+4 reinforced concrete waffle slab building under multiple loading conditions including dead load, live load, wind load, and seismic load. The structural modeling, analysis, and design are performed using STAAD.Pro software in accordance with Indian Standard codes such as IS 456:2000, IS 875, and IS 1893. The study aims to evaluate critical structural responses such as bending moments, shear forces, deflections, axial forces, and plate stresses through finite element analysis. By incorporating realistic material properties, boundary conditions, and load combinations, the research provides an in-depth understanding of waffle slab performance under gravity and lateral loads.

In conventional flat slab construction, increasing span length or load intensity often necessitates greater slab thickness, which increases dead load and material consumption. Waffle slabs overcome this limitation by eliminating non-structural concrete from the tension zone, thereby improving structural efficiency without compromising strength. The ribbed configuration enhances moment resistance and distributes loads more uniformly across columns and supports. This makes waffle slabs particularly suitable for auditoriums, parking structures, commercial complexes, and multi-storey residential buildings where column-free spaces are desirable. The structural analysis of such systems requires careful evaluation of load transfer mechanisms, punching shear resistance,

and moment distribution between column strips and middle strips. Traditional analytical approaches such as the Direct Design Method (DDM) and Equivalent Frame Method (EFM) provide approximate solutions; however, finite element-based numerical modeling offers more accurate results, especially under seismic and wind loading conditions. In this study, a three-dimensional structural model of a G+4 waffle slab building is developed using STAAD.Pro. The geometry, support conditions, member properties, and loading parameters are defined as per codal provisions. The structural responses are critically examined to ensure safety, stability, and serviceability.

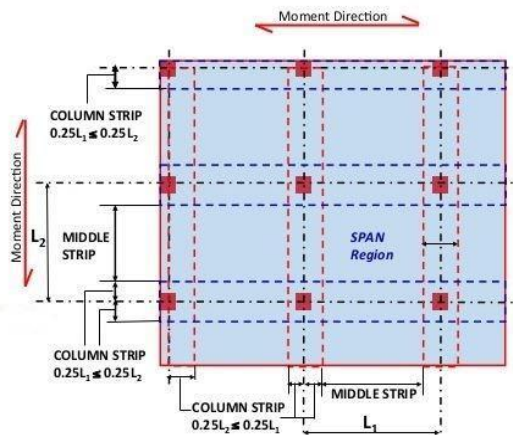


Fig 1 Column and middle strips of flat slabs

The importance of computer-aided structural analysis in modern engineering practice cannot be overstated. Manual calculations for multi-storey buildings under combined gravity and lateral loads are time-consuming and prone to human error. Advanced software such as STAAD.Pro enables precise modeling, efficient load application, automatic generation of load combinations, and detailed design verification as per international and Indian design standards. The present investigation integrates structural planning, load computation, modeling, analysis, design, and post-processing evaluation into a systematic workflow. The results obtained from the analysis are checked against permissible limits for deflection, stress, and strength requirements under limit state design methodology. The study not only validates the adequacy of waffle slab systems for medium-rise buildings in seismic Zone IV but also highlights their economic and structural advantages over conventional slab systems. Through this research,

a comprehensive understanding of waffle slab structural behavior under multi-load conditions is established, demonstrating its suitability for modern urban infrastructure development.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Waffle slab systems have attracted considerable attention in structural engineering research due to their efficiency in spanning large areas while reducing self-weight. Chowdhury and Singh (2012) emphasized that waffle slabs are commonly adopted in buildings requiring large unobstructed spaces such as auditoriums and commercial complexes. Their study highlighted that analytical solutions for waffle slabs are limited, especially when boundary conditions deviate from simple supports. As a result, finite element modeling (FEM) techniques are often employed to obtain more accurate results. The authors concluded that while approximate analytical approaches provide preliminary design values, detailed numerical analysis offers better insight into stress distribution and displacement behavior, particularly in ribbed slab systems subjected to complex loading conditions.

Galeb and Atiyah (2011) investigated waffle slab construction as an alternative to conventional flat slab systems. They reported that waffle slabs significantly reduce dead load due to the removal of non-effective concrete from the tension zone. This reduction in weight improves structural efficiency and decreases column and foundation sizes. Their research also pointed out that the ribbed configuration enhances stiffness and improves resistance to bending moments. Furthermore, the study discussed the structural advantages of providing solid heads or drop panels near columns to improve punching shear resistance. The findings demonstrated that waffle slabs are not only economical but also structurally reliable when designed according to codal provisions.

Somasekhar and Prabhakaran (2015) examined the structural behavior of waffle slabs with openings at various locations using numerical modeling techniques. Their research revealed that the presence of openings affects moment distribution and stress concentration within the slab system. They emphasized the need for careful modeling and

reinforcement detailing around openings to maintain structural safety. The study also highlighted the growing demand for waffle slabs in modern architecture due to their aesthetic appearance and ability to accommodate services between ribs. The authors recommended the use of advanced finite element software for accurate evaluation of displacement and stress patterns in waffle slab systems.

Sapountzakis and Katsikadelis (1999) studied stiffened plate systems, which share similarities with waffle slabs in terms of ribbed structural behavior. Their research focused on the rigorous analysis of stiffened plates subjected to combined transverse and in-plane loading. The study concluded that stiffened plate systems provide enhanced load-carrying capacity and improved structural efficiency compared to solid plates. Their findings are relevant to waffle slab behavior, as the ribs in waffle slabs function similarly to stiffeners in plate systems. The research emphasized the importance of considering both flexural and shear effects during analysis to ensure accurate structural assessment.

Recent studies on computer-aided structural analysis, including works by Bhattacharjee and Nagender, as well as Prabin Kumar and Sanjay Nath, have demonstrated the effectiveness of STAAD.Pro software in analyzing and designing multi-storey waffle slab buildings. These researchers highlighted the advantages of using finite element-based software for evaluating deflections, bending moments, shear forces, and axial loads under various load combinations. Their findings confirmed that software-based analysis provides reliable results consistent with manual calculations while significantly reducing computational effort. Overall, the literature supports the adoption of waffle slab systems for medium- and high-rise buildings due to their structural efficiency, reduced material consumption, and adaptability to complex loading conditions.

### III. WORKING METHODOLOGY

The working methodology of the present study involves systematic structural planning, numerical modeling, analysis, and design of a G+4 reinforced concrete waffle slab building using STAAD.Pro

software. The process begins with structural planning and preparation of architectural drawings using AutoCAD. The general building configuration, including number of storeys, storey height (3 m each), foundation depth, and overall plan dimensions, is defined. The building is assumed to be located in Seismic Zone IV (Delhi NCR region), and relevant parameters such as zone factor, importance factor, and soil conditions are considered as per Indian Standard codes. Based on the architectural layout, the structural framing plan is generated, including beams, columns, waffle slab ribs, and plate elements. Appropriate member dimensions are assigned initially based on preliminary design assumptions. The waffle slab system is modeled with ribs in both directions, ensuring realistic representation of stiffness and load transfer behavior.

After structural modeling, material properties and section properties are defined in STAAD.Pro. Concrete grade and reinforcement specifications are assigned as per IS 456:2000. Beam dimensions (0.35 m × 0.35 m), column dimensions (0.45 m × 0.35 m), and slab thickness (0.15 m) are specified. Fixed supports are assigned at the base nodes to simulate foundation restraint conditions. Load definitions are then created, including dead load (self-weight of structure), live load as per IS 875 (Part 2), wind load as per IS 875 (Part 3), and seismic load as per IS 1893 (Part 1). Appropriate load combinations are generated to account for critical design scenarios. The finite element analysis is carried out by selecting the “Run Analysis” option, and the structural responses such as deflection, bending moment, shear force, axial force, torsion, plate stress, and beam stress are obtained in post-processing mode. The results are checked for errors, warnings, and structural stability before proceeding to design.

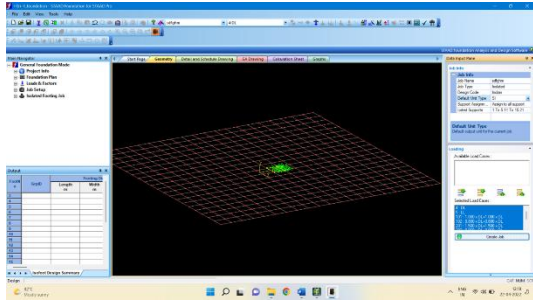


Fig 1: Isolated Footing Modeling in STAAD Foundation

Fig 1 shows the modeling of isolated footing in STAAD Foundation Advanced. The foundation geometry is created by importing support reactions from the STAAD.Pro structural model. The red grid represents the foundation mesh used for finite element analysis. The green arrows at the center indicate the applied column loads transferred from the superstructure. The selected load combinations (DL, LL, and factored combinations) are included for foundation design. This stage is important because it defines soil–structure interaction and evaluates footing size based on allowable soil bearing capacity. The software automatically generates footing dimensions and checks for bending, shear, and punching shear criteria.

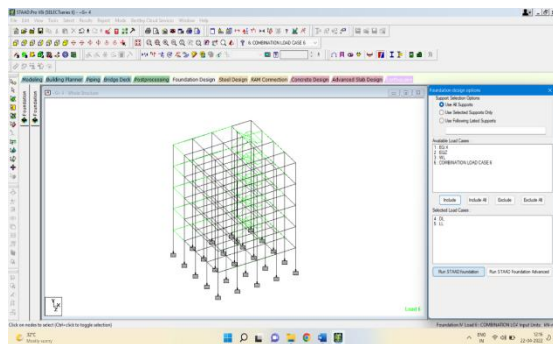


Fig 2: Foundation Load Selection in STAAD.Pro

Fig 2 shows the structural model in STAAD.Pro with the Foundation Design option activated. The entire G+4 building frame is visible along with support nodes at the base. The “Foundation Design Options” panel is displayed on the right side, where load cases such as DL, LL, EQ, and load combinations are selected for foundation analysis. This step ensures that the most critical load combinations are considered while transferring loads to the footing design module.

It acts as an interface between superstructure analysis and substructure design.

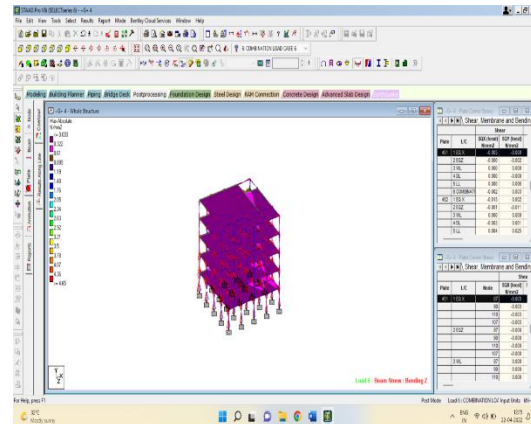


Fig 3: Beam Stress (Bending Z) Contour in Post-Processing Mode

Fig 3 illustrates the beam stress contour diagram under Load Case 6 (Combination Load Case). The color contour represents the magnitude of bending stress along the Z-direction. Darker shades (pink/red) indicate higher stress concentrations. The graphical representation helps identify critical beams experiencing maximum bending. The stress table shown on the right provides numerical values of shear and bending stresses for selected members. This result is used to verify beam design adequacy as per IS 456:2000.

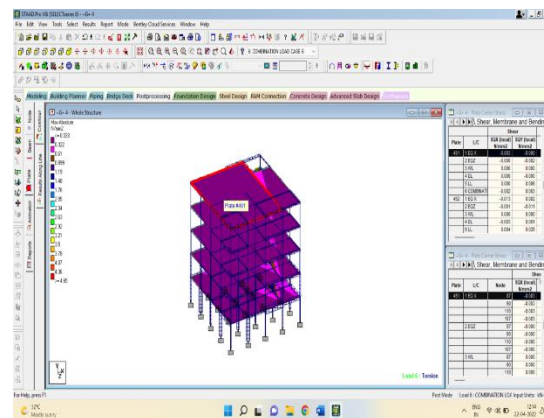


Fig 4: Torsional Stress Distribution in Structural Model

Fig 4 shows the torsional stress distribution of the building under Load Case 6. The highlighted plate (Plate 8451) indicates the element selected for stress evaluation. The contour diagram displays variation of

shear, membrane, and bending stresses across slab elements. The torsion effect is particularly important in irregular buildings or under seismic loading. The results help ensure that slab and beam elements satisfy torsional resistance requirements and reinforcement detailing is adequate.

#### CONCLUSION

The present work focuses on the finite element-based analysis and design of a G+4 reinforced concrete waffle slab building using STAAD.Pro. The structure was analyzed under critical load combinations including dead, live, wind, and seismic loads as per relevant Indian Standard codes. The numerical results indicate that all structural components—slabs, beams, columns, and foundations—satisfy the strength, stability, and serviceability criteria prescribed by the codes. The waffle slab system effectively reduces the overall self-weight of the structure while maintaining adequate stiffness and load-carrying capacity. Deflections, bending moments, shear forces, and stresses were found to be within permissible limits, confirming the structural efficiency of the system. The comparison between manual design concepts and software-based analysis revealed close agreement in reinforcement requirements, validating the reliability of computer-aided design tools. Overall, waffle slab construction proves to be an economical and structurally efficient solution for multi-storey buildings requiring larger column-free spaces and improved aesthetics. The study demonstrates that the use of advanced finite element software significantly enhances design accuracy, reduces computational effort, and ensures safe and optimized structural performance, particularly in regions subjected to seismic and wind effects.

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