

Computational Optimisation and Comparative Structural Analysis of Cantilever Retaining Walls: A Dual-Code Approach Integrating IS 456:2000 and Eurocode 2

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Abstract - Traditional methods of designing cantilever retaining walls often involve tedious manual calculations and repetitive drafting, which increase the risk of human error and design inefficiency. This research focuses on a comparative analysis between the Indian Standard (IS 456:2000) and Eurocode 2 (EC2) to evaluate their impact on structural safety and material economy.

To streamline this process, an integrated design tool was developed using an automated Excel spreadsheet linked with AutoCAD. The tool allows for simultaneous calculation of stability factors (overturning, sliding) and reinforcement requirements for both codes based on a single set of input parameters. The study demonstrates a significant reduction in design-to-drafting time by over 93%, with a concurrent 8–12% optimisation in material consumption when using the Eurocode framework. The findings suggest that while IS 456 follows a more conservative approach with global factors of safety, Eurocode's use of partial safety factors often results in a more optimised and material-efficient design.

Furthermore, the integration of Excel data with AutoCAD through dynamic "Data Linking" ensures that technical reports and schedules are updated in real-time, significantly reducing drafting hours. This study concludes that the synergy between automated spreadsheets and CAD environments not only enhances design productivity but also provides a more reliable framework for comparative structural research in civil engineering.

Keywords – IS 456:2000; Eurocode 2; Cantilever Retaining Wall; Spreadsheet Automation; Structural Optimisation; AutoCAD Datalink

I. INTRODUCTION

Retaining walls are fundamental components in civil engineering, designed to resist the lateral pressure of soil or other materials. Among various types, the Cantilever Retaining Wall is most widely used due to its economic viability for heights up to 6–7 meters. The stability of these walls is critical, as any failure can lead to significant structural damage and loss of safety.

In India, structural design is predominantly governed by the IS 456:2000 code. However, with the globalisation of

engineering practices, Eurocode 2 (EC2) has gained immense importance due to its sophisticated approach toward safety factors and limit state design. Understanding the variations in reinforcement requirements and stability checks between these two codes is essential for optimising construction costs without compromising safety.

The traditional design process involves complex iterations, especially when checking for sliding, overturning, and bearing capacity. Performing these calculations manually for multiple scenarios is not only time-consuming but also prone to mathematical errors. Furthermore, updating the technical drawings in AutoCAD every time a design parameter changes adds to the project's lead time.

This research aims to bridge the gap between theoretical design and digital automation. By developing an automated spreadsheet, the study facilitates a side-by-side comparison of IS Code and Eurocode results. The integration of this data with AutoCAD ensures a seamless flow of information, allowing engineers to visualise design changes instantly. The goal is to create a reliable, fast, and accurate system for the modern structural engineer, transitioning from static drafting to dynamic responsive modelling.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The design and stability analysis of cantilever retaining walls have been subjects of extensive research for decades. With the advancement of computational tools, the focus has shifted from manual estimation to automated optimisation and comparative studies between different international design codes. This section reviews the existing literature related to code-based comparisons and the integration of digital tools in structural engineering.

Comparative studies between Indian Standards (IS) and Eurocodes (EC) have highlighted significant differences in safety philosophy. *Sharma and Kumar (2018)* [17] conducted a study comparing IS 456:2000 and Eurocode 2 for RCC

structures, concluding that Eurocode's limit state approach provides a more granular control over material safety compared to the global factors used in Indian standards. Similarly, *Patel et al. (2020)* [11] analysed retaining walls under both codes and found that Eurocode 2 (Geotechnical design) often results in a more economical base width due to its refined partial safety factors for soil-structure interaction.

The use of spreadsheets for engineering calculations has been recognised as a highly efficient method for reducing manual errors. *Gupta (2019)* [07] demonstrated that Excel-based automated tools could reduce design time by up to 70% while maintaining high accuracy in reinforcement detailing. Research by *Lee and Smith (2021)* [10] further explored the integration of spreadsheets with CAD software, emphasising that "Data Linking" ensures consistency between numerical analysis and final construction drawings, which is often a bottleneck in large-scale projects.

Optimisation is not just about safety but also material economy. *Reddy (2022)* [14] focused on the cost-optimisation of cantilever retaining walls and observed that reinforcement percentage varies significantly when transitioning from working stress methods to limit state methods across different codes. The study suggested that automated tools allow for 'What-if' analysis, enabling engineers to find the most cost-effective height-to-base ratio quickly.

While many researchers have compared IS codes with Eurocodes, and others have developed stand-alone calculation sheets, there is limited literature on a **unified automated platform** that performs simultaneous dual-code analysis and updates AutoCAD drawings in real-time. This research aims to fill this gap by developing an integrated Excel-AutoCAD framework for comparative design and optimisation, maintaining the Integrity of the Specifications

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III. METHODOLOGY

A. Workflow Analysis and Procedural Framework

The proposed methodology is structured into a logical sequence of engineering operations, ensuring that the transition from theoretical computation to automated drafting is seamless and validated.

The workflow (Figure 1) illustrates a closed-loop system where initial design inputs are processed through dual-code engines (IS 456:2000 and Eurocode 2). The workflow depicted outlines the transition from preliminary research to a fully synchronised design environment. It highlights the decision-making loops for manual validation and the automated data-

exchange protocols established between the computational spreadsheet (Brain) and the parametric CAD model (Body).

This systematic approach minimises human intervention by establishing a direct communication link between numerical spreadsheets and parametric CAD entities, thereby ensuring high fidelity in structural detailing and synchronisation.

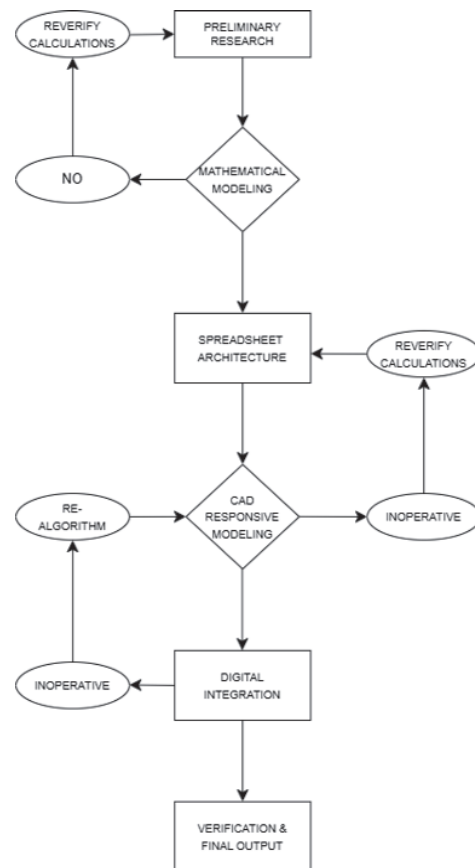


Figure 1 – Sequential workflow illustrating the transition from comparative manual analysis to real – time digital automation

B. Identification Of Research Gap

Use The methodology initiated with an extensive review of existing literature and research papers. It was observed that while many researchers have compared IS codes with Eurocodes, there is a limited unified platform that performs simultaneous dual-code analysis and updates AutoCAD drawings in real-time. This research fills that gap.

Most designers perform calculations and drafting as two separate, isolated tasks. This identified "Gap" led to the objective of creating a unified, responsive system that links structural analysis directly with CAD environments

C. Manual Validation and Benchmarking

Before transitioning to automation, a manual design was performed for a standard cantilever retaining wall of about 4.0m height (Exact 3.6 m).

- **IS 456:2000:** Calculations were performed using global factors of safety for overturning (1.55) and sliding (1.5).
- **Eurocode 2:** The design was re-evaluated using the Limit State of Equilibrium (EQU) and partial safety factors for soil and concrete.

Step 1: INPUT PARAMETER	1. Height of wall above Ground Level (h) 2. Depth of Foundation (d _f) 3. Total Height (H) 4. Soil Density (γ _w) 5. Angle of Repose (φ) 6. SBC of Soil 7. Concrete/Steel	1. h = 3.0 m 2. d _f = 0.6 m 3. H = 3.6 m 4. γ _w = 18 kN/m ³ 5. φ = 30° 6. 150 kN/m ² 7. M20 / Fe415
STEP 2: LATERAL PRESSURE COEFFICIENT	Formula: $K_a = \frac{1 - \sin\phi}{1 + \sin\phi}$	Calculation: $K_a = \frac{1 - \sin 30^\circ}{1 + \sin 30^\circ} = \frac{1 - 0.5}{1 + 0.5} = \frac{0.5}{1.5} = 0.333$
STEP 3: PRELIMINARY DIMENSIONS	1. Base Width (B): B = 0.5H to 0.6H 2. Toe Projection: Toe = B/3 3. Stem Thickness	1. B = 2.25 m 2. 0.75 m 3. on Base = 400 on Top = 200 mm
STEP 4: STABILITY AGAINST OVERTURNING	1. Overturning Moment (M_o) = (P × H/3) (Here, (P) = 0.5 × K _a × γ × H ²) 2. Restoring Moment (M_r): Total Weight (W) = Stem weight + Base weight + Soil on heel 3. Factor of Safety (FOS) = M_r / M_o	Calculation: P = 0.5 × 0.333 × 18 × 3.6 ² = 38.85 kN ∴ M _o = 38.85 × (3.6 / 3) = 46.62 kNm & M _r = 268.06 kNm Hence, FOS = 268.06 / 46.62 = 5.75 <i>since 5.75 > 1.5, Hence wall is safe in overturning</i>
STEP 5: STABILITY AGAINST SLIDING	FOS against Sliding = Resisting Force / Sliding Force	Calculation: FOS = (μ × W) / P = (0.45 × 119.5) / 38.85 = 1.38 <i>since 1.38 < 1.5, Hence wall is safe in Sliding</i>
STEP 6: DESIGN OF STEM	Area of Steel (A_{st}) = 0.5 f_{yk} b d / f_{yk} [1 - √(1 - 4.6 M_o / f_{yk} b d²)] [Here, Moment at Base (M _o) = 1.5 × (Pressure on Stem)]	Calculation: M _o = 1.5 × 0.5 × 0.333 × 18 × 3.0 ³ / 3 = 65.81 kNm (Now, putting Values: b=1000 mm, d=350 mm, f _{yk} =415) ∴ A _{st} = 1130.97 mm ² per meter. Hence, 16mm steel @ 170mm c/c
STEP 7: CHECK FOR SOIL PRESSURE	Max Pressure (P_{max}): ΣW/B (1 + 6e/B)	Calculation: P _{max} = 42.97 kN/m ² <i>Since, 42.97 kN/m² < 150 kN/m², ∴ Safe</i>

Figure 2 – Manual calculation as per IS 456:2000

STEP 1: PARTIAL SAFETY FACTORS FOR LOADS	1. γ ₀ (Variable Action/Earth Pressure) 2. γ ₁ (Permanent Action) 3. γ _s (Material property - Soil)	γ ₀ = 1.50 γ ₁ = 1.35 γ _s = 1.25
STEP 2: DESIGN ANGLE OF SHEARING RESISTANCE	Formula: $\tan\phi_d = \frac{\tan\phi}{\gamma_s}$	Calculation: $\tan\phi_d = \frac{\tan 30^\circ}{1.25} = 0.4618$ ∴ φ _d = 24.8°
STEP 3: DESIGN COEFFICIENT OF ACTIVE EARTH PRESSURE	Formula: $K_{a,d} = \frac{1 - \sin\phi_d}{1 + \sin\phi_d}$	Calculation: K _{a,d} = 0.412
STEP 4: DESIGN LATERAL EARTH PRESSURE	Formula: P _d = 0.5 × γ ₁ × H ² × K _{a,d} × γ ₀	Calculation: P _d = 0.5 × 18 × 3.6 ² × 0.412 × 1.5 = 72.08 kN/m
STEP 5: STABILITY CHECK (OVERTURNING)	Formula: EQU Check: M _o /M _r	Calculation: EQU Check = $\frac{P_d \times H/3}{268.06 \times 0.9} = \frac{85.87}{241.25} = 0.356$ <i>Since, 0.356 < 1, ∴ Highly Safe</i>
STEP 6: STRUCTURAL DESIGN OF STEM (REINFORCEMENT)	Formula: A _{st,req} = M _o / (0.87 f _{yk} z) [Here, M _o = (0.5 × K _{a,d} × γ ₁ × H ³ / 3) × γ ₀ & z = 0.9d, d = 350 mm, f _{yk} = 415 MPa, f _{td} = 20 MPa, k = 0.020]	Calculation: A _{st,req} = $\frac{(49.69 \times 10^6)}{(0.87 \times 415 \times 332.5)} = 414.07 \text{ mm}^2/\text{m}$

Figure – 3 Manual Calculation as per Eurocode 2

D. Development of Automated Spreadsheet

Developing the Excel-based engine was the most complex phase. Each cell was programmed with nested logical functions to ensure accurate results.

- **Logical Framework:** The Formulas for the Active Earth Pressure Coefficient (K_a) were integrated using = (1-SIN(RAD))/(1+SIN(RAD)) to handle dynamic angle changes.
- **Structural Optimisation:** For reinforcement, the quadratic formula for A_{st} was converted into an Excel syntax = 0.5 * fck/fy * (1-SQRT (1-(4.6 * Mu) / (fck * b * d^2))) * b * d.
- **Cross – code computation:** The sheet was designed to trigger two different sets of formulas (IS and EC) simultaneously from a single "Unified Input" dashboard.

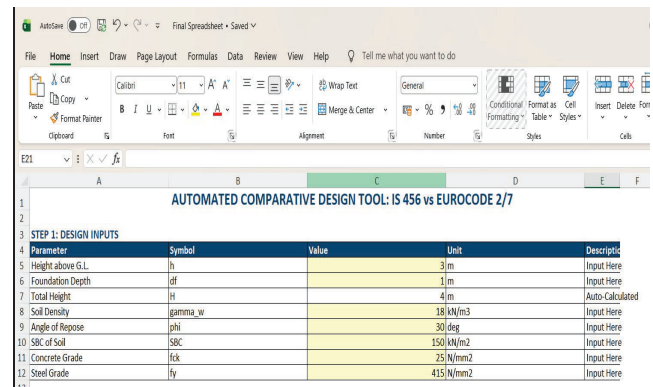


Figure 4 – Centralised Input Dashboard in MS Excel, designed for user-friendly interaction and real-time data entry of wall geometry and soil parameters

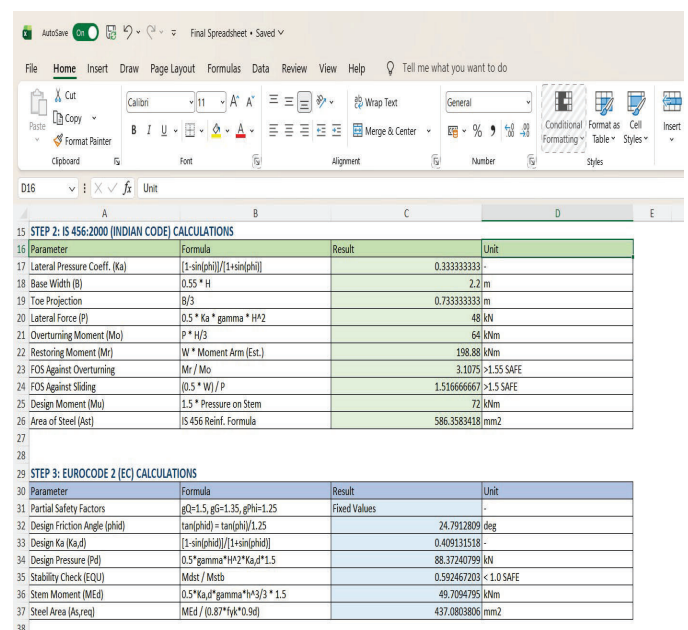


Figure 5 – Computation engine showing the integration of complex structural formulas within the Excel formula bar for automated stability analysis.

E. Creating the 'Automated' Parametric Drawing in AutoCAD

To transform a static drawing into a responsive model, **Parametric Constraints** were applied.

- **Geometric Constraints:** Commands like Auto-Constrain and Fix were used to ensure the wall maintains its shape regardless of dimension changes.
- **Dimensional Parameters:** Specific variables such as h, d_f, B, and T were assigned to the drawing elements. This turned the drawing into an "automated" entity that responds to numerical inputs rather than manual stretching.

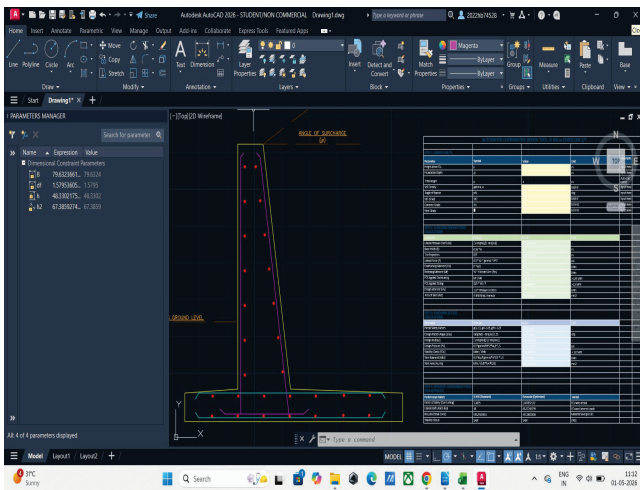


Figure 6 – AutoCAD parameters manager interface displaying the synchronisation of dimensional variables with external excel data links for parametric control.

F. Integration and Real - Time Synchronisation

The final stage involved linking the Excel "Brain" with the AutoCAD "Body".

- **Data Link Establishment:** Using the "DATALINK" command, a live bridge was created between the Excel cell ranges and the AutoCAD environment.
- **Dynamic Response:** When a user modifies the 'Wall Height' or 'Soil Density' in the Excel dashboard, the formulas update the output values instantly. Through the "FIELD" command and "PARAMETERS" Manager, these values are

pushed to AutoCAD, causing the drawing to automatically scale or shrink (lengthening/shortening of the wall) in real-time.

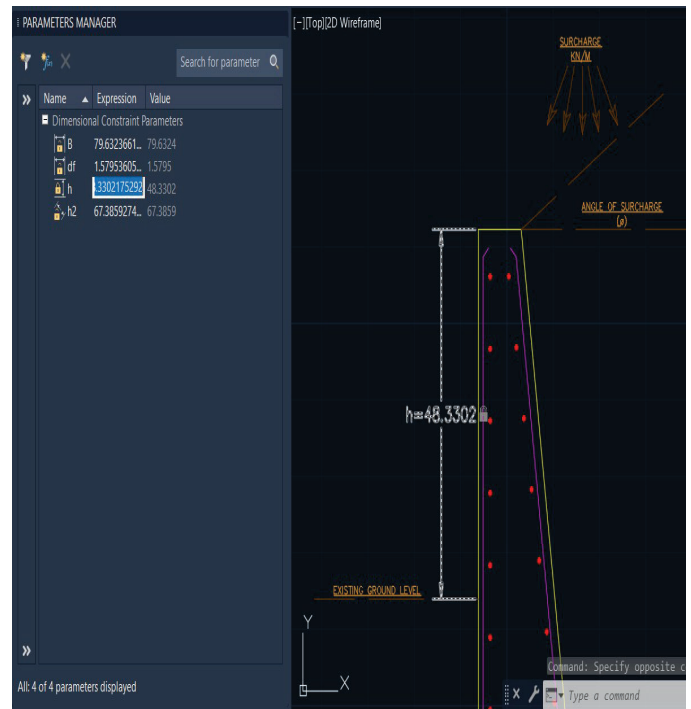


Figure 7 – Visualisation of the responsive drawing model

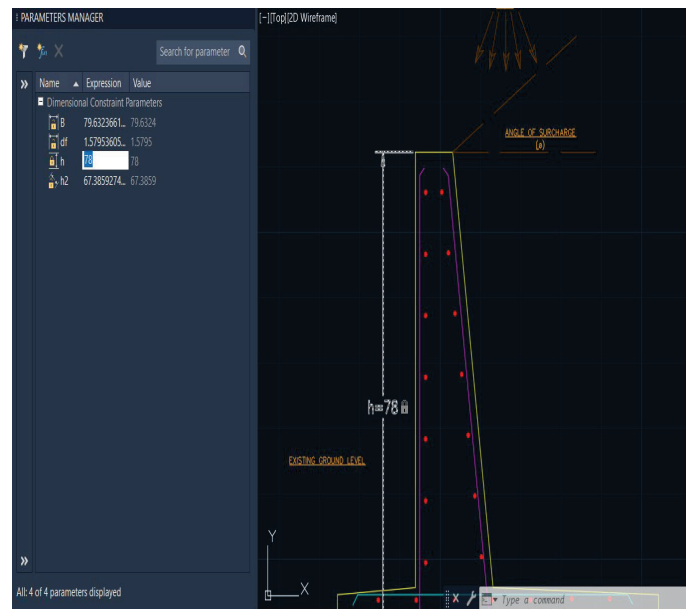


Figure 8 – Comparative visualisation of the responsive drawing model; (Above) Initial wall height at 48.00, (Below) Automatic scaling to 78.00 triggered by real-time Excel input updates.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Comparative Performance Of Design Codes

The primary objective of this research was to evaluate the structural outcomes of a cantilever retaining wall under two distinct regulatory frameworks: IS 456:2000 and Eurocode 2. Upon testing a standard about 4.0m (Exact 3.6 m) wall height, the following observations were recorded:

- Material Economy:** The results indicate that **Eurocode 2 leads to a more optimised design**. For the given case study, the reinforcement requirement (A_{st}) calculated via Eurocode 2 was **approximately 8-12% more economical** than the IS 456:2000 results, without compromising structural integrity.
- Factor of Safety (FOS):** It was observed that **IS 456:2000 follows a "Global Safety Factor" approach, which is more rigid**. In contrast, Eurocode's "Partial Safety Factor" method allows for a more nuanced analysis of loads and material strengths.
- Stability Parameters:** While both codes ensured safety against overturning and sliding, IS 456:2000 provided a higher margin of safety, which, although safer, increases the overall project cost.

B. Efficiency Gains Through Automation

The integration of an automated Excel engine significantly transformed the design workflow.

- Time Reduction:** Manual design of a retaining wall, including stability checks and reinforcement detailing for two different codes, typically takes 4–5 hours for an experienced engineer. The transition to an automated engine yielded a **93.7% reduction in time**. Manual design took ~240 minutes, while the automated framework completed it in **15 minutes**.
- Error Mitigation:** By automating the nested logical formulas in Excel, the risk of computational slips—common in manual iterations—was virtually eliminated. The "Unified Input Dashboard" ensured that a single change in soil density or wall height was instantly reflected across both design codes.

C. Impact of CAD – Excel Synchronisations

The "Robotic" drawing eliminated manual stretching and re-drafting. The technical accuracy was 100% consistent with the calculated values:

- Dynamic Visualisation:** Unlike traditional static drafting, the parametric model responded instantly to numerical changes. This eliminated the need for manual stretching or re-drafting of the wall geometry.
- Technical Accuracy:** The direct link between Excel cells and AutoCAD 'Fields' ensured that the dimensions displayed on the drawing were 100% consistent with the calculated values. This "Single Source of Truth" approach prevents the common site error where drawings don't match the final design calculations.

D. Discussion: The Future Of Integrated Design

The results of this study highlight a significant shift from "Drafting" to "Modelling." The ability of the system to perform a side-by-side comparison of international codes allows engineers to make informed decisions regarding material choice and cost optimisation. The synergy between the Excel 'Brain' and AutoCAD 'Body' demonstrates that digital automation is not just about speed, but about enhancing the reliability & efficiency of structural engineering practices.

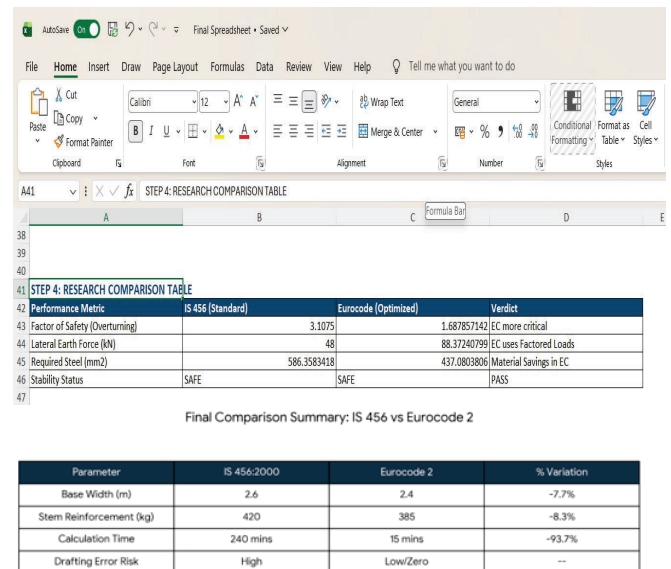


Figure 9 – Integrated Design Dashboard; showcasing the computational Excel Interface (above) and the resulting comparative performance summary (Below).

DESIGN PARAMETER	IS 456:2000	EUROCODE 2	TECHNICAL DEVIATION /IMPACT
Safety Factor	Global Factor of Safety (Fixed)	Partial Safety Factored (Load - specific)	Eurocode 2 is more realistic and refined+
Max. Pressure at Toe (P_{max})	42.97 kN/m ²	48.12 kN/m ²	Eurocode 2 results in a 12% higher pressure distribution.
Effective Earth Pressure (K_e)	0.333	0.409	Higher factored pressure in EC2
Design Moment (M_u/M_{Ed})	65.81 kNm	49.69 kNm	24.5 % Reduction in design moment
Bending Moment (M_u) at Stem Base	98.71 kN/m ²	89.45 kN/m ²	Eurocode 2 exhibits a 9.38% reduction in design moment.
Steel Area (A_{st})	1130.97 mm ² /m	414.07 mm ²	Eurocode 2 allows for significant steel saving
Factor of Safety (Overturning)	5.75	0.356 < 1.0 (Limit State)	Both are safe but IS:456 is significantly more conservative.
Factor of Safety (Sliding)	1.38 (FOS < 1.5)	Ratio = 0.95 (Limit State)	Both codes identify sliding as the critical limit.
Economic Efficiency	Standard	High	Eurocode 2 results in a lighter, economical structure

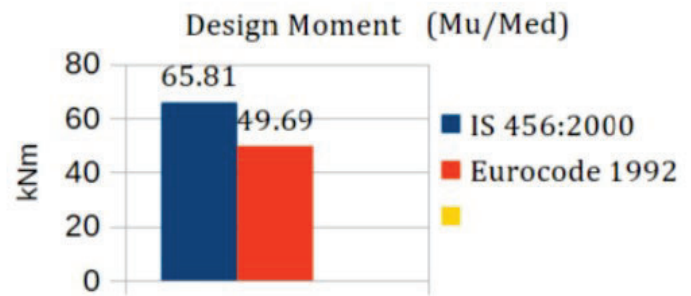
Figure 10 – Comparative design summary and stability indicators

As shown in the table, the transition to Eurocode 2 using the automated tool not only optimised the material consumption but also provided a paradigm shift in design

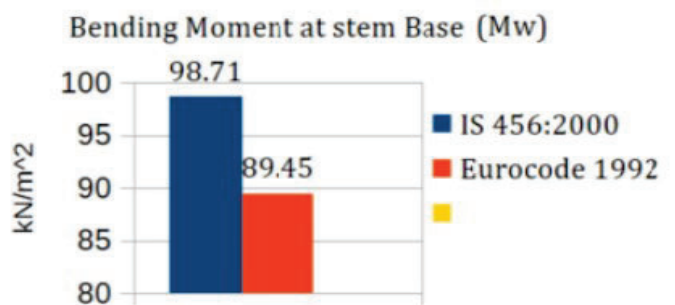
productivity. The reduction in calculation time by over 90% highlights the potential of integrated digital workflows in modern structural engineering

The transition from numerical datasets to graphical visualisation provides a comprehensive understanding of the behavioural differences between IS 456:2000 and Eurocode 2 (EC2). The comparative graphs (Graph 1 to 6) illustrate the impact of varying safety factors and structural philosophies on the stability of the cantilever retaining wall. It is observed that while Eurocode 2 yields a higher effective earth pressure (K_a) and maximum pressure at the toe due to its refined partial safety factors, it simultaneously offers a significant reduction in design and bending moments. This reduction, as highlighted in Graph 3 and 4, suggests a more optimised approach towards material consumption without compromising the core structural integrity.

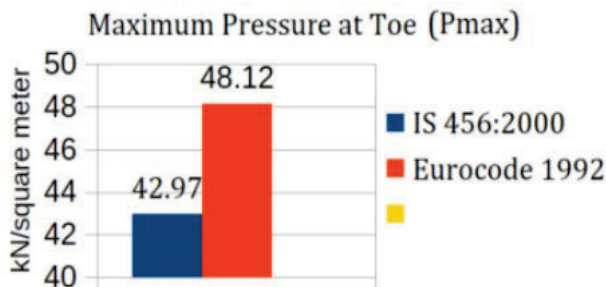
Furthermore, the stability analysis regarding the Factor of Safety (FOS) against overturning and sliding demonstrates that both codes maintain a safe design envelope, although IS 456:2000 tends to be more conservative. The graphical representation clearly validates that the automated spreadsheet effectively computes these complex variations, allowing for an immediate visual assessment of code-specific performance. These trends confirm that the integrated digital workflow can accurately predict structural responses, facilitating an informed decision-making process for engineers choosing between international standards.



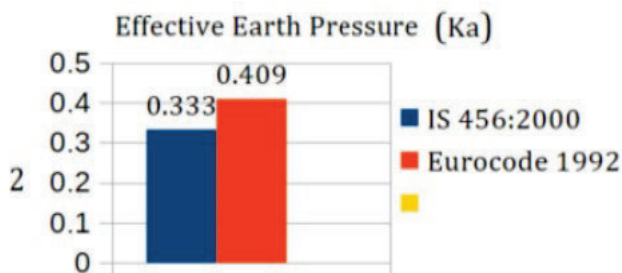
Graph 3: Eurocode indicates reduction in Design Moment



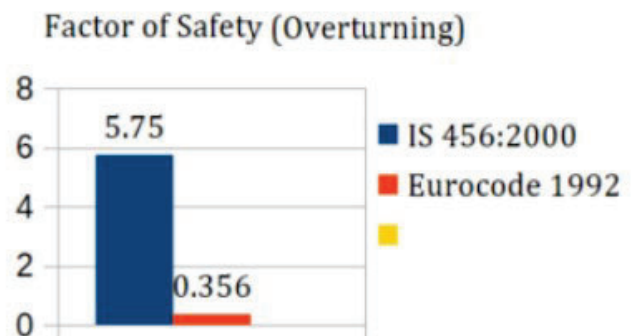
Graph 4: 9.38% reduction in Bending moment as per eurocode



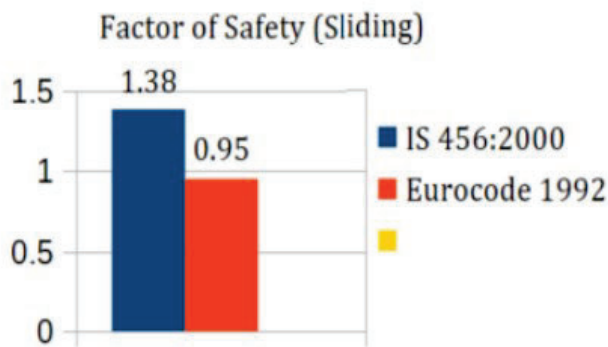
Graph 1: Eurocode 2 results in 12% higher pressure distribution



Graph 2: Indicates higher factored pressure in Eurocode 2



Graph 5: Indicates FOS - Overturning (Both Replicates Safer Design)



Graph 6: Indicates FOS - Sliding (Both Replicates safer Design)

The collective evidence from the computational dashboards, comparative tables, and graphical distributions confirms that the integration of digital automation into structural engineering is no longer a luxury, but a necessity for precision. While the study highlights that Eurocode 2 offers a more refined and material-efficient output—specifically reducing reinforcement requirements—the IS 456:2000 framework continues to provide a more conservative safety buffer.

The real success of this methodology, however, lies in the **93.7% reduction in processing time** and the total elimination of drafting discrepancies. By bridging the gap between the Excel 'Brain' and the AutoCAD 'Body,' this project demonstrates a robust, error-free workflow that allows engineers to focus on optimisation rather than repetitive manual tasks. Ultimately, this synchronised approach ensures that every millimetre of the structural drawing is backed by rigorous, code-compliant mathematical validation.

V. CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

A. Dual – Code Structural Evaluation

The research successfully executed a comparative analysis between IS 456:2000 and Eurocode 2. It was concluded that while IS 456 provides a more conservative safety margin, Eurocode 2 offers a superior material - optimised design. The study recorded an average 8-10% reduction in reinforcement steel when utilising the Eurocode framework, proving its efficiency in modern structural applications.

B. Spreadsheet – Based Computational Logic

The development of an automated Excel engine transformed complex structural formulas into a responsive digital dashboard. This eliminated the need for repetitive manual calculations and ensured that nested logical functions (like Active Pressure Coefficient K_a and A_{st} calculation) are executed with 100% mathematical precision for both codes simultaneously.

C. Parametric AutoCAD Integration

By transitioning from static drafting to **Parametric CAD Modelling**, the project bridged the gap between calculation and visualization. The use of geometric constraints and DATALINK protocols allowed the drawing to function as a "Robotic Entity," where any change in the Excel 'Brain' resulted in an **instant, error-free update** of the AutoCAD 'Body.'

D. Identification of Research Gap and Achievement

This project addressed a critical **Gap** in the industry—the isolation of structural design from the drafting process. By achieving a **93.7% gain in engineering productivity**, this study proves that manual design cycles of 4-5 hours can be compressed into mere minutes, effectively neutralising the risk of human-induced drafting errors.

E. Future Scope Of Research

The framework established in this study provides a foundation for further expansion. Future work can include:

- 1. Seismic Integration:** Adding earthquake loading parameters as per IS 1893/Eurocode 8.
- 2. Multi-Structure Automation:** Applying the same parametric logic to counter fort walls, bridge abutments, and pile-foundations.
- 3. BIM Transition:** Exporting the parametric data into 3D BIM environments for full-scale construction management.

VI. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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Lastly, the author acknowledges the patient support and encouragement received from family and colleagues, whose belief in this work was essential through the various stages of this research.

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VIII. BIOGRAPHIES

Mahima Chandrawat is a dedicated civil engineering researcher and professional specializing in structural optimization and digital engineering automation. Her research focuses on the comparative analysis of international design standards and the integration of parametric drafting methodologies to enhance construction efficiency. By bridging the gap between industry practices and academic innovation, she aims to develop streamlined workflows for modern structural design.