

"Tensegrity Structure: A New Approach to Structural Engineering"

Akshaykumar Anilkumar Agrawal¹ <u>akshayitorientalindia@gmail.com</u> Swati Agrawal² <u>swati.agrawal@kalingauniversity.ac.in</u> Akshit Lamba³ akshit.lamba@kalingauniversity@ac.in

¹Student, Department of Civil Engineering, Kalinga University, Naya Raipur, Chhattisgarh ^{2,3} Assistant Professor, Department of Civil Engineering, Kalinga University, Naya Raipur, Chhattisgarh ***

Abstract - This thesis explores the innovative concept of tension structures and their potential as a new paradigm in the field of structural engineering. Tension, derived from the word "tension integrity," refers to a structural system characterized by a balance between tension and compression elements. This study examines the basic principles, design methodologies and structural analysis methods associated with tension structures, offering a comprehensive understanding of their unique behaviour and capabilities.

The study begins with an in-depth study of tension theory, exploring its historical context, mathematical foundations, and key concepts. Through a thorough literature review, various existing applications and examples of tensile structures from different architectures and engineering systems are reviewed, illustrating their various forms, functions, and benefits.

The thesis also explores the applications of tensile structures in various fields such as architecture, construction, engineering, aerospace and robotics. The benefits of tensile structures, such as their lightweight nature, adaptability and potential for kinetic and deployable systems, are highlighted, opening new opportunities for sustainable design and innovative engineering solutions.

Finally, the study concludes by summarizing key findings, discussing the challenges and limitations of tension structures, and suggesting avenues for future research and development. By adopting tension as a new approach to structural engineering, this thesis aims to inspire more research, testing, and real-life implementation of tension structures, making progress in the field and determining the future of structural design.

Key Words: tension integrity, challenges, limitations, lightweight

1.INTRODUCTION

Tensile structures are 3-D trusses whose members are assigned specific functions. Some joints are tense, others are compressed. In general, rigid parts or bars are used for compression members; wire or cable-type elements can be used as tension members.



Fig. 1.1 Photograph of Tensegrity Chair Developed Using Tensegrity Principle

Most linear configurations will not be in equilibrium. Therefore, if it is built, it will collapse in a different way. Only the string configuration that is in a predetermined and stable equilibrium is called a Tensegrity structure. If designed well, the application of a force to a Tensegrity structure will take a slightly different shape to support the applied force.

The word "Tensegrity" is short for the phrase "Tensional integrity". This term can be traced back to Buckminster Fuller, who first coined it in a patent application in 1962. The construction of the true Tensegrity structure was first attributed to the artist Kenneth Snelson, who created the X in 1948.

In his patent, Snelson describes Tensegrity as a group of structures that have what can be called "continuous compression, continuous tension properties". This continuity was also recognized by Buckminster Fuller in his patent statement: "Throughout the structure there will be sides of

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Another important aspect is stability. Tensegrity systems are created when a set of continuous compression components interact with a continuous tension component to define a stable volume in space."

A more mechanistic explanation is given by Hanaor, who describes the Tensegrity structure as "An internally fixed, loosely connected network of cables or tendons tensioned against a system of bars or struts". This description indicates that the system is pre-stressed and compressed. This means that there is only axial force and no torques in the system.

A general definition of Tensegrity structure is:

"The geometry of the material system is in stable equilibrium if, starting from any initial state close to that geometry and going to infinity of time, all the particles in the material system return to that geometry."

A bar is a rigid body and a string is a one-dimensional elastic body. Therefore, if the nodal point of the bar in the system is in equilibrium, the material system is in equilibrium.

In summary, the above explanation covers many aspects of the Tensegrity concept, which are as follows:

1. Tensile Beam frame: Tensile structure belonging to a group of three-dimensional trusses.

2. Pure compression / tension members: Tensile structure has only pure compression and tension members. The voltage element used is only a cable that can withstand voltage.

3. Compression localization: In classic Tensegrity structures, the compression elements are continuous. It seems to float in a continuous network of tension elements.

4. Pre-stressed Structure: A state of pre-stress or self-stress is necessary for the stability of the structure as it stabilizes the internal mechanism.

2. MATHEMATICAL EXPLANATION

Tensile structures are characterized by a balance between tension and compression elements that give them their unique mechanical properties. A mathematical description of tensile structures involves an understanding of the equilibrium conditions that govern their behavior.

Let's consider the basic tension structure consisting of compression elements and wires or tendons (tension elements). Struts are rigid bars that resist compression forces, while cables or tendons are flexible elements that carry tension forces.

To mathematically describe the behavior of tensioned structures, we can consider the equilibrium in each individual element. Struts are compressed and can resist axial force. They follow the principles of solid body mechanics, which means that the sum of forces and moments must be zero to achieve equilibrium.

On the other hand, cables or tendons can only carry tensile forces and cannot resist compression. They act only as tension elements. Cables are typically light and flexible, allowing them to transmit tensile forces efficiently.

The overall balance of the tension structure is achieved through the interaction of struts and cables. The tension in the cables creates a self-reinforcing system where the struts are pushed outwards, resisting compressive forces. At the same time, the struts transmit a compressive force to the cable, which cools and transmits a tensile force. Mathematically, the equilibrium of the structure in tension can be described using the static principle. Forces in tension and compression elements must satisfy certain equilibrium equations. This equation assumes that the sum of the forces and moments at every joint or point in the structure is zero. The forces on the cable are determined by the geometry and connections of the structure, as well as the applied external load.

Mathematical modeling techniques such as matrix methods, finite element analysis or geometric methods are often used to analyze and design tension structures. This method allows determination of element forces, internal stresses, strains, and overall structural behavior.

It should be noted that the mathematical analysis of tension structures can be complicated due to their nonlinear behavior and the interaction between tension and compression elements. However, advances in computing tools and optimization algorithms have made it possible to analyze and design tension structures with greater accuracy and efficiency.

In summary, the mathematical description of tension structures involves understanding the equilibrium conditions that govern the behavior of compression and tension elements. We can analyze and design this unique structural system by considering the forces and moments acting on each element and satisfying the equilibrium equation.

3. GENERAL MATHEMATICAL EQUATION FOR TENSIONAL INTEGRITY

Mathematical equations for tensile structures depend on specific geometry and structural connections. Therefore, we can only deliver a general mathematical representation that describes the state of equilibrium in a tensional integrity system.

Consider a tension structure consisting of n struts and m cables. Each strut is connected in compression and each cable carries tension. We can show compressive force as F_c1 , F_c2 , ..., F_cn , and tensile force as F_c1 , F_t2 , ..., F_tm .

To represent the state of equilibrium, we must consider the forces and moments present at each joint or point in the tensile structure. For simplicity, let us consider a three-dimensional tension structure.

The force balance equation for the joint can be defined as:

 $\Sigma F_z = 0$,

where ΣF_x , ΣF_y and ΣF_z represents the amount of force in the x, y and z directions respectively. This equation ensures that the forces acting on the joint are balanced in all directions.

Also, the moment equilibrium equation for the joint is:

 $\Sigma M_x = 0,$

 $\Sigma M_y = 0$,

 $\Sigma M_z = 0,$

where ΣM_x , ΣM_y , and ΣM_z represents the amount of moment (torque), respectively, about the x, y, and z axes. This equation ensures that the moments acting together are balanced.

The specific form of this equation will depend on the geometry and connectivity of the tensile structure. Geometry determines the length and orientation of the struts and cables, while the connection determines how the struts and cables are connected at the joints.

Additional constraints such as lengthening or shortening of cables, maximum compressive strength of struts, or other

 $[\]Sigma F_x = 0$,

 $[\]Sigma F_y = 0$,

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design considerations may be considered to solve the equilibrium equation.

It should be noted that the equation for tensile structures is often nonlinear due to nonlinear geometry and materials. Therefore, numerical methods such as finite element analysis or iterative algorithms can be used to find a solution for this equation.

In summary, the mathematical equation for tension structure includes force equation and moment equilibrium in each joint, by calculating the amount of force and moment in each direction. The specific form of this equation depends on geometry, connectivity, and structural constraints.

4. BENEFITS & APPLICATIONS OF TENSIONAL **INTEGRITY STRUCTURES**

Tensile structures offer several advantages and have several potential applications. Some important results and benefits associated with tensional integrity structures are:

1. Structural Efficiency:

The tension structure distributes forces efficiently. The balance between tension and compression elements allows for a lightweight design that can withstand significant loads. They have a high strength-to-weight ratio, making the structure efficient and economical.

2. Flexibility and adaptability:

Density structure can show flexibility and adaptability, thus deformation and adjustment under different load conditions. This flexibility makes it suitable for areas where dynamic forces such as wind or seismic loads are a concern. They can also be modified or altered to meet changing needs or space constraints.

Durability: 3.

Tensile structures have natural resilience and can absorb and dissipate energy during dynamic events such as earthquakes or impact loads. The nature of distributed power in tension systems allows energy to be dissipated, reducing damage and improving structural integrity.

4. Aesthetics and design freedom:

Tension structures offer unique aesthetic qualities and design possibilities. The interplay between tension and compression elements creates interesting and interesting patterns. These structures can be used in architectural design, sculptures, art installations, and even add interesting and attractive elements to the environment such as bridges or rooftops.

5. Scalability:

The density structure can be scaled up or down without significant changes to the basic design principles. This scale can be adapted to various applications, from small sculptures to large architectural structures. It can be easily assembled and disassembled, allowing for efficient transportation and installation.

Redundancy and fault tolerance:

Tensile structures have unique advantages due to multiple load paths provided by tension and compression elements. This advantage contributes to their fault-tolerant nature, because damage or failure in one component does not necessarily cause the entire structure to collapse. This feature improves security and reliability.

7. **Biological and bio-inspired applications:**

Tensile structures have attracted attention in the field of biomechanics and bio-inspired engineering. This is similar to the structural principles found in biological systems, such as muscle tension and tendons that support the bone structure. The tensor concept has been used in the design of artificial muscles, robotic systems, and biomechanical models.

It should be noted that the successful implementation and performance of prestressed structures depends on proper design, analysis and construction. It requires a thorough understanding of structural behavior and careful consideration of load paths, material properties, and component interactions. Collaboration with experienced professionals in their respective fields is essential to achieve the best results.

Moreover, it should be noted that tensegrity structures will not fail or collapse suddenly as compared to other structures due to its flexibly and ability to withstand loads and absorb shock. This is the biggest advantage of tensegrity structure as it will show signs of deformation before collapse so that it can be repaired before its complete failure.

5. WHY TENSEGRITY STRUCTURE IS BETTER THAN OTHER STRUCTURES & WHY IT **SHOULD BE OPTED**

Tensile structures offer several advantages over conventional structures, making them a preferred choice in many applications. Some of the reasons why tension structures are considered better than other structures are:

1. Weight efficiency:

Tensile structures are known for their lightweight design. The combination of tension and compression elements allows for efficient power distribution, resulting in a strong yet lightweight structure. This feature is particularly useful in applications where weight reduction is important, such as aerospace or portable structures.

2. Flexibility and adaptability:

structure has natural flexibility Density and adaptability. It can deform and adjust under different loading conditions, allowing for efficient absorption and force distribution. This flexibility makes it suitable for applications where dynamic loads such as wind or seismic forces are a concern. It can be modified or modified to meet changing needs or space constraints, providing greater flexibility in design.

Durability and Durability: 3.

Density structure shows durability and strength due to superior load path. The nature of distributed power in tension systems allows energy to be dissipated, reducing damage and improving structural integrity. In the event of failure or damage to one component, the rest of the structure can often continue to support the load, increasing safety and reliability.

4. Aesthetic appeal:

Tension structures offer unique aesthetic qualities and design freedom. The interplay between tension and compression elements creates interesting and interesting patterns. These structures can be used in architectural design, sculpture, art installations and other creative applications, adding a unique and interesting element to the environment.



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5. Compactness and Portability:

The compact structure is very compact, so it can be easily adjusted in size without major changes to the basic design principles. They can be built on a variety of scales, from small-scale sculptures to large architectural structures. In addition, the tension structure can be efficiently assembled and disassembled, facilitating transport and portability.

6. Material efficiency:

Tensile structures often require less material than conventional structures. Efficient power distribution will reduce the need for excessive material consumption, saving materials and costs. This aspect is particularly useful in priority applications to reduce the use of materials, such as sustainable and environmentally friendly design.

It should be noted that tension structures are not better than other structures in every scenario. The choice of structure depends on several factors, including the specific application, design requirements, budget constraints, and available experience. Conventional structures may be more convenient or cost-effective in some cases. It is important to carefully evaluate the specific requirements of the project and consult with civil engineers and architects to determine the most suitable structural solution.

6. FUTURE SCOPE IN GEOSPACE ENGINEERING

The future scope of stress in geospatial engineering has significant potential for a variety of applications. Some potential areas where tension structures can be used in geospatial engineering are:

1. Space exploration and habitat:

Tensile structure can be deployed as a lightweight and adaptable structure in space exploration. It has the potential to be used to build habitats on other planets or for long-term space missions. Prestressed structures can provide flexible and efficient solutions for creating living, storage and work spaces in demanding space environments.

2. Moon and Mars infrastructure:

Tension structures can be used to build infrastructure on the Moon and Mars. It can be used to make landing pads, flight platforms and other support structures. The light nature of the tension system makes them suitable for outdoor transportation and assembly.

3. Space-based telescopes and antennas:

Compact structures offer advantages for building largescale telescopes and antennas. It can provide a lightweight yet stable platform for mounting sensors and communication devices. The dynamic nature of the rigid structure makes it suitable for scalable systems, so the space mission changes and adapts.

4. Space dust removal:

Density structure can play a role in space dust removal efforts. It can be designed as an embedded structure that can capture and manage space debris using a robotic system. Tension-based structures can help safely locate and remove satellites, rocket stages, and other space debris, which can help reduce the risk of collisions and improve space stability.

5. Planetary probes:

Structures based on tension have potential for integration into planetary probes. The adaptability and flexibility of

the tension system can allow you to traverse difficult terrain more efficiently. The traction drive can move over rough surfaces and overcome obstacles, providing stability and enhanced mobility for planetary exploration.

6. Lunar or Martian Tree Houses:

In the development of Lunar or Martian greenhouses, tension structures can be used to produce stable food in long-term operations. The light and adaptable nature of the voltage system can make it easier to deploy and assemble in the environment. Tensile structures can provide a foundation to support plant growth and create a controlled environment for plant growth.

7. Structural support and anchorage:

Structural structures can be used for structural support and anchor systems in geospatial engineering. Spacebased platforms can provide stability and load distribution for antennas or other equipment. Tensile elements in the tension system can help strengthen the structure and resist the forces that occur in geospatial conditions.

These are just a few examples of potential future tensions in geospatial engineering. As technology advances and our understanding of stress structures improves, there will be more innovative applications and opportunities in this field. In order to unlock the full potential of tension structures in geo space engineering, it is important to continue research, development and collaboration between engineers, architects and space agencies.

7. FUTURE SCOPE IN SESMIC ZONES & ENGINEERING:

The future limits of tension in seismic bands and engineering have promising potential for a variety of applications aimed at improving structural strength and seismic performance. Some potential areas where tension structures can be used are:

1. Seismic Resistant Buildings:

Tensile structures have flexible and adaptive properties that can be useful in seismic zones. The ability to transform and distribute forces can help reduce the effects of earthquakes. Tensile principles are incorporated into structural design to increase seismic resistance, allowing structures to absorb and dissipate seismic energy while maintaining overall stability.

2. Bridge Construction:

Tensile principles can be applied to bridge design in seismic zones. Tensile structures offer a lightweight and durable solution to withstand spans and seismic forces. Their inherent flexibility can help bridges accommodate ground motion during earthquakes, reduce damage, and maintain structural integrity.

3. Seismic isolation system:

Tension structures can be incorporated into the seismic isolation system to improve the seismic performance of buildings and infrastructure. This system isolates the surface structure and reduces the transmission of seismic forces. Tension-based isolators can provide a lightweight and effective solution for isolating buildings, thereby increasing their resistance against earthquakes.

4. Structural health monitoring:

Tensile structures can play a role in the health monitoring system for seismic belts. The tensile and compression elements of the tension system can be used by sensors to monitor the behavior of the structure and detect potential damage or deformation. Timely monitoring can provide



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early warning of structural integrity issues and allow for proactive repair work.

5. Temporary Shelter and Emergency Structures:

Tensile structures can be used in the design of temporary shelters and emergency facilities in seismic zones. Their lightweight nature facilitates rapid deployment and assembly and makes them suitable for disaster response scenarios. Resilience-based shelters can provide a safe and stable place for affected populations after an earthquake.

6. Substructures:

Tensile principles can be used in the design of substructures in seismic zones. The inherent flexibility and load distribution capabilities of prestressed structures can help resist ground motion and seismic forces. Tension-based design can improve the stability and safety of underground structures, such as tunnels, underground storage or geothermal facilities.

7. Retrofit of existing structures:

Stress-based retrofit techniques can be used to improve the seismic performance of existing structures in seismic zones. Tensile elements can be added to strengthen and brace buildings, bridges or other infrastructure. Retrofitting with the tensile principle can increase the durability of the old structure and bring it up to current seismic standards.

As seismic events continue to be a significant challenge in many areas, the study of tension structures in seismic engineering offers an innovative and potentially effective approach to increasing structural strength and mitigating the effects of earthquakes. Continuous research, testing, and collaboration among engineers, architects, and seismic specialists is essential to realizing the full potential of stresses in seismic zones.

8. DIAGRAMATIC REPRESENTATION OF TENSEGRITY CHAIR STRUCTURE BASED ON TENSEGRITY PRINCIPLE

This is the diagrammatic representation of the tensegrity chair working model which is developed by myself. As made known in the figure below, two structures are made of same dimensions and three cables are connected, two at outward side and one in the center of the structure. On the center cable tensional force is acting to counter the compression forces which is acting on the side cables to pull the structure. Thus, in the course of counteraction a prestress is created which is balancing the structure.





> WORKING MODEL SPECIFICATIONS:

- 1. Top steel plate -254x254x3mm Thk
- 2. Hollow Rectangular Tube (RHS) 23x23x1mm Thk)
- 3. ISA 2020 2No.
- 4. Linked Chain 4 No. (4 Compression, 1 Tension)
- SAFE LOAD BEARING CAPACITY @110Kg or 1079.1KN



Fig. 8.2 Photographs of Tensegrity Chair Developed using Tensegrity Principle



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Fig. 8.3 Photographs of Tensegrity Chair Developed using Tensegrity Principle

9. MASS ANALYSIS OF TENSEGRITY STRUCTURE WHEN BUILT USING DIFFERENT MATERIALS

Mass Comparison of Tensegrity Model (Using Different Materials)								
SI. No.	Description	Length (In Mtr)	Width (In Mtr)	Thickness (In Mtr)	No of Items	Total Length	Mass (In Kg)	Remarks
A.	For Steel Model							
1	Hollow Rectangular Tube	0.023	0.023	0.001	8	2.400	1.658	Density of Steel 7850Kg/cum
2	Steel Plate	0.254	0.254	0.003	1	-	1.519	
3	ISA 2020	0.020	0.020	0.003	2	1.588	1.429	.90Kg/mtr
4	Linked Chains	-	-	-	5	1.715	2.573	1.5Kg/mtr
						Total Mass=	7.179	
B.	For Concrete Model		0					
1	Top And Bottom Frame	0.300	0.300	0.023	2	-	9.936	Density of Concrete 2400Kg/cum
2	Triangle Frame	0.023	0.023	-	2	1.588	2.016	
3	Linked Chains	-	•	-	4	1.715	2.573	
						Total Mass=	14.525	
C.	For Wooden Model						1	
1	Top And Bottom Frame	0.300	0.300	0.023	2	-	3.714	
2	Triangle Frame	0.023	0.023	-	2	1.588	0.754	
3	Linked Chains	-	-	-	4	1.715	2.573	
						Total Mass=	7.040	

RESULT:

It is very vibrant from the above comparison that why tensegrity structures should be opted instead of other structures wherever necessary. Considering its durability, flexibility, load bearing capacity, light weightiness, easy to move and the most important thing is deformation before failure are the differences which makes the tensegrity structure stand out from other types of structures. Moreover, the load bearing capacity of this model is exceptional & other models shall fail when designed using different materials without changing the size and dimensions on the same load i.e. 110Kg or 1079.1KN

10. CHALLENGES & LIMITATIONS OF TENSIONAL INTEGRITY STRUCTURES

Tensile structures, consisting of a system of rigid members connected by tension elements, have attracted interest in various fields due to their unique mechanical properties and potential applications. However, like any other structural system, tension structures have their challenges and limitations. Here are some of them:

1. Design complexity:

Designing tension structures can be challenging due to complex geometries and interdependent tension and compression elements. Achieving stability and balance in the structure requires careful consideration of tension and compression forces acting on members.

2. Unexpected behavior:

Tensile structures often exhibit non-intuitive mechanical behavior. Conventional sensitivities based on experience gained with solid structures do not work, making analysis and predicting their response difficult. Understanding the dynamic behavior and response to external loads requires special knowledge and computational tools.

3. Sensitivity to element failure:

Tensile structure relies on the integrity and strength of tension and compression elements. The failure or damage of any of these components can significantly affect the stability and performance of the structure. Ensuring robustness and redundancy in the design becomes critical.

4. Limited load-carrying capacity:

Density structures usually have low load-carrying capacity compared to conventional structures of similar size. Relying on tension members to transfer loads limits their ability to support heavy loads or resist concentrated forces. Reinforcement techniques or hybrid approaches may be required to increase load carrying capacity.

5. Sensitivity to Environmental Factors:

Density structures can be sensitive to environmental factors such as wind, temperature and humidity. Changes in these conditions can affect tension and compression forces in the structure, causing deformation or loss of stability. It is important to properly consider the environmental impact during design and maintenance.

6. Limited choice of materials:

Density structure requires special materials with appropriate strength, flexibility and durability properties. Determining the appropriate materials for rigid members and tension members can be difficult, especially when considering factors such as weight, cost, and availability. Advances in materials science are constantly expanding the range of options, but careful selection of materials remains essential.

7. Construction and Installation Challenges:

Construction and assembly of tensile structures can be complicated and time-consuming. Achieving the desired balance and stability often requires careful adjustment and stretching of the elements. This process can require skilled labor, specialized equipment, and precision in component manufacturing, which can add to the complexity and cost of construction.

Despite these challenges and limitations, tension structures offer excellent advantages such as lightweight design, economical use of materials, and adaptability to dynamic conditions. Research and continuous technological advances aim to overcome these limitations and expand the use of tension structures in fields as diverse as architecture, robotics, aerospace, and biomechanics.



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11. CONCLUSION

Tensile structural analysis reveals the concept that light weight is a true measure of structural efficiency. A new architecture with new characteristics is envisioned to be revolutionary, elastic, lightweight, expandable, active, compact and dynamic, and the most important characteristic of tension structure. Tension can be one of the structural systems of the future.

Recent events show that tension can be applied to architecture and engineering. Research shows the potential of tension as a lightweight structure with a large span, a short span bridge, or supporting lightweight infrastructure. Of course, a more complete structural analysis is needed, but at least the preconceived notion of tension as an unusable system must be rejected.

Investigative work is being carried out on possible tension structures. As a result, earthquakes, typhoons, floods, etc. temporary shelters, bridges, field hospitals, etc. in devastated areas can be used for disaster recovery by building a deployable system, but more research is needed to develop this and many other applications.

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BIOGRAPHIES



Akshay Kumar Agrawal

Akshay Kumar Agrawal is currently a student & pursuing higher education from one of the most prestigious universities in India i.e. The Kalinga University, Naya Raipur in the state of Chhattisgarh. In addition to his academic career, Akshay Kumar Agrawal has working experience in several flagship civil construction projects in India.