



Limit and plastic collapse loads for un-reinforced mitred bends under pressure and bending

Sung-Hwan Min^a, Jun-Young Jeon^a, Kuk-Hee Lee^a, Yun-Jae Kim^{a,*}, Peter J. Budden^b

^a Korea University, Department of Mechanical Engineering, 1-5 Ka, Anam-Dong, Sungbuk-Ku, Seoul 136-701, Republic of Korea

^b Assessment Technology Group, EDF Energy, Barnwood, Gloucester GL4 3RS, UK

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ABSTRACT

Approximate limit and plastic collapse load solutions for un-reinforced mitred bends under internal pressure and under bending are proposed in this paper, based on three-dimensional finite element analysis and approximate solutions for smooth bends. Solutions are given for single- and multi-mitred bends (mainly for single and double segmented bends) with the pipe mean radius-to-thickness ratio (r/t) ranging from $r/t = 5$ to $r/t = 50$, and the bend radius-to-mean radius ratio (R/r) from $R/r = 2$ to $R/r = 4$. Internal pressure, in-plane bending and out-of-plane bending loads are considered, but not their combination. It is found that the essential features of limit and plastic collapse loads for mitred bends are similar to those for smooth bends, and thus existing solutions for smooth elbows can be used to construct limit loads and plastic collapse for mitred bends.

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1. Introduction

Due to their economic benefits, mitred bends are often used for large-diameter pipework or ducting in chemical plants. A recent review of the literature for the structural assessment of mitred bends [1] suggests that information on limit¹ and plastic collapse² loads for mitred bends is very limited, despite the fact that such information is essential for design and assessment. In the literature, in fact, the authors have found only a few papers related to this issue and they considered only single-mitred bends [2,3]. In contrast, there have been many published papers on limit and plastic collapse loads for smooth bends [4–20]. As smooth bends are limiting cases of mitred bends, information on limit and plastic collapse loads for smooth bends would be useful. In particular, recent works on limit and plastic collapse loads for smooth bends,

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +82 2 3290 3372; fax: +82 2 926 9290.

E-mail address: kimy0308@korea.ac.kr (Y.-J. Kim).

¹ The limit load is obtained using FE analysis by incorporating an elastic-perfectly-plastic material model and small displacement theory.

² The plastic collapse load can be obtained using FE analysis by incorporating an elastic-plastic material behavior with the non-linear geometry effect. In the present work, it is obtained by incorporating an elastic-perfectly-plastic material model with the non-linear geometry effect. Definition of the collapse load, adopted in this paper, will be explained in Section 2.3.

published by the authors and co-workers [15–20], are worth noting. Based on three-dimensional (3-D) finite element (FE) limit analysis using elastic-perfectly plastic materials, the authors proposed closed-form approximations for limit pressures and plastic collapse bending moments (defined by the twice-elastic-slope method [21]) of smooth bends. The solutions were based on FE results covering mean radius-to-thickness ratios from two to fifty with various values of the bend radius-to-pipe radius ratio. For loading, all possible loading conditions were considered; internal pressure, in-plane closing bending, in-plane opening bending and out-of-plane bending.

This paper proposes approximate limit and plastic collapse loads for un-reinforced mitred bends, based on 3-D FE limit analysis using elastic-perfectly plastic materials. Noting that smooth bends are limiting cases of mitred bends, limit and plastic collapse load solutions for smooth bends are taken as the reference solutions. By comparing FE results with these reference solutions, approximate limit and plastic collapse load solutions are proposed for single- and multi-mitred bends under internal pressure, in-plane bending and out-of-plane bending. Section 2 describes the FE limit analysis performed in this work. Limit and plastic collapse load solutions for smooth bends are summarised in Section 3. Plastic collapse load solutions for mitred bends are presented for bending in Section 4 and for internal pressure in Section 5. Conclusions are given in Section 6.