

**THE SEARCH FOR AN ALTERNATIVE MATERIAL TO CEMENT**

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The troubled situation prevailing in Sri Lanka has severely effected the manufacture of Cement. The problem has dual implication on production;

- 1) The inability to mine and produce clinker from the limestone deposits of the North. Clinker is an important raw material in the manufacture of Cement.
- 2) The closure of the factories in the North-East provinces.

These problems has resulted in the need for clinker to be imported incurring high expense and delays. The cement now produced is expensive and is rather than being a boon has turned out to be a bane to the local house builder.

This has necessitated in the use of pozzolana cements as a cementitious material in structural elements. Sri lanka is a rice growing country. Every paddy harvesting season leaves an abundance of paddy husks, which when burnt, the resulting ash has strong cementing properties.

The statistics on strength tests with such pozzolana cement as the main binder has indicated strengths comparable with O.P.C. concrete. Other properties such as soundness, fineness and setting time (initial, final) of the pozzolana cement are at acceptable levels for construction. The setting time in the absence of an accelerator is observed to be slow. However with the correct percentage of an accelerator, O.P.C. or lime, it could be featured as an effective building material in this age of high cost cements.