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ISSN 2251 - 9149
Article
IAROSG (2017) Vol.5, No.1, 1-18
International Journal of Advancement in Remote Sensing, GIS and Geography



REMOTE SENSING AND GIS FOR CIVIL ENGINEERING APPLICATIONS AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
Jaganathan*, C., Prasad Kumar¹, Kohan Cooper², Rahul B. Garg³, Anand Kc. Shaha⁴, Kiril Avstak⁵, and Ramesh Hebbar⁶

¹ Department of Remote Sensing, BIT, Mesra, Ranchi, Jharkhand.
² Department of Surveying Engineering, BIT, Mesra, Ranchi, Jharkhand.
³ Department of Civil Engineering, IIT, Ranchi, Jharkhand.
⁴ Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, BIT, Mesra, Ranchi, Jharkhand.
⁵ Chair Institute of Urban Development, Nepal, Kathmandu.
⁶ Corresponding Author: jaganathan@mesra.ac.in

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Remote Sensing And Gis Applications In Civil Engineering

1. INTRODUCTION: Civil Engineering is one of the oldest and important branches of engineering, comprises of many sub-disciplines such as surveying (topographical/cadastral/surveying etc.), construction (infrastructure/transportation/infrastructure/materials etc.), transportation (roads/bridges/traffic etc.), water resources (water supply/treatment/canal/dams/sanitation etc.), environmental (chemical and biological waste/public health/pollution/impacts/energy/resources management etc.), geological (rock, soil mechanics/ earthquake engineering etc.) and coastal (erosion/landslides/dredging/dredgers etc.). In simple terms the civil engineering applications can be divided into two groups: a) human related by environment related, and remote sensing plays a vital role in providing required near-real-time information about the geospatial/topography/weather/landcover which will potentially help the civil engineers for effective planning and decision making (Fig. 1).

One of the basic requirements in civil engineering is ground investigation (i.e., survey). Classical land surveying in civil engineering refers to the process of determining position, distance, angle and height of buildings and terrestrial features. Surveying is an integral part of any developmental activity however technological advancements have brought key changes in the survey process and quality of data. Key benefits of remote sensing in surveying applications come from three important developments: as advancements in spatial, spectral and temporal resolutions (which helps in accurate detection, demarcation of object/boundary and measurements); its capability to produce 3D stereo viewing which helps in measuring heights of objects and terrain; and c) availability of advanced Geo-spatial algorithms and tools.

Surveying is a remote inaccessible areas and mountainous regions have posed great difficulty in the past and one has to invest lot of time for travel, man power and money. Fortunately, remote sensing technology has provided a possibility to see and survey those remote locations from the air and to quantify all needed parameters of the terrain (such as height, slope, aspect, contours, watershed delineation, surface area, volume etc.) without actually going to field (See Table 1 & 2 for details). Moreover, data are acquired today at various scales ranging from sub-meter level (satellite/individual tree) to broader level (river/forest/geomorphological patterns) and hence providing a gold mine of data and information for surveys. Apart from geometrical facts about ground features it is also important to have multi-scale database about land conditions, its usage and geo-environmental interaction (i.e., drivers) so as to equip urban/environmental administrators for a better future planning and develop strategy for unforeseen calamity (such as fire, earthquake, flood, landslide etc.).

Aerial photo dependent Photogrammetric techniques were used in the past for extracting elevation of objects/ground, digital surface model (DSM), 3D city modelling, and close range photogrammetry techniques are being used recently for measuring 3D properties of buildings, monuments and quantify surface deformations [1-2]. Today, data from High spatial resolution satellites, LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging device mounted on small aircraft) and UAV are more preferred for building inventory and city surveying [3-4] as it provides highly accurate elevation data (micro-continues, quickly reveals city geometry and helps to model climate change impact (e.g., flood scenario in a city as well as contributes in establishing baseline maps for future studies. For example, Netherlands has below mean sea level and hence they are prone to sea water intrusion and flooding. To ensure the safety of their citizens Dutch Government (Ministry of transport, public works and water management - Rijkswaterstaat) carry out regular LIDAR survey along their dikes to monitor water levels, health of grasses (structure of sand and dunes), soil volume, deformations, wave characteristics etc.