Numerical study on the effects of river bank stabilization

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Numerical study on the effects of river bank stabilization

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Highlights

- A 2D numerical model developed in Delft 3D to study the effects of river bank stabilization
- Stabilizing the outer river bends results in a less sinuous and narrower channel with sharper bends.
- The river morphological behaviour to bank stabilization should be kept in mind while planning the land use nearby rivers

Overview

The purpose of bank stabilization is to prevent lateral shift of rivers caused by bank erosion (Julien 2012). However, changes in river morphology after bank stabilization often result in damages and long-term drawbacks. For instance, shift in the river bank line increases the risk to nearby structures and agricultural land and the deepening of the river bed near the protected bank results in the failure of the bank protection structures (Minor et al., 2007; Tomohiro, 1996). Lack of knowledge about cross sectional and planimetric changes in rivers after bank stabilization intensifies the risk of damages to structures and land.

To the best of author's knowledge, no reliable numerical study is available till date to study the effects of bank stabilization on river morphology. This served as the main motivation of this study as this research aims at developing a numerical model for predicting the changes in river planform and thalweg profile after bank stabilization. We conducted a Delft 3D numerical study inspired by the work of Friedkin, (1945) . We set up model an initially straight channel with a transverse plate acting as forcing with the same bed materials, valley slope, variable discharge. Cycles of flow transformed the straight channel into a meandering river that reached a morphological state similar to that of Friedkin's experiment # 1 of Part-II as shown in Figure 1b. The results of calibrated model are shown in .a Results **of Calibrated model, b**a. The model was validated against Friedkin's experiment # 2 of Part-II. After it reached to a morphology as in the experiment, the banks were stabilized by revetment and differences were observed. This morphological configuration was then considered the starting point of the investigation. Several scenarios with longitudinal bank stabilization were simulated and the results were compared to base case with freely erodible banks.

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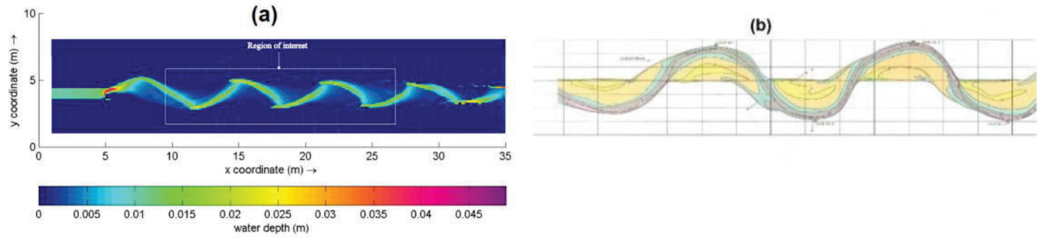

Figure 1.a Results of Calibrated model, b. Results of experiment # 1 of Part-II (source: Friedkin, 1945)

Preliminary Results

The model was used to analyze the effects of bank stabilization on different planimetric and cross-sectional parameters such as sinuosity, bend length, meander wavelength as chord lengths, meandering index, radius of curvature were compared with and without bank stabilization. Some preliminary results for the Friedkin's case i.e. case with each outer bend stabilized near the thalweg except the last one are reproduced in

and **Error! Reference source not found.**. In this case, it can be observed that bank stabilization restricts both the longitudinal and lateral movement of the river bends within a certain corridor and results in a smaller sinuosity as compared to a river without bank stabilization (base case). Therefore, bank stabilization on each outer bend results in reduced bend length, chord length and in some cases, it produces smaller sharp bends with reduced radius of curvature. In addition, decrease in the width of the channel and increase in the depth of thalweg was also observed.

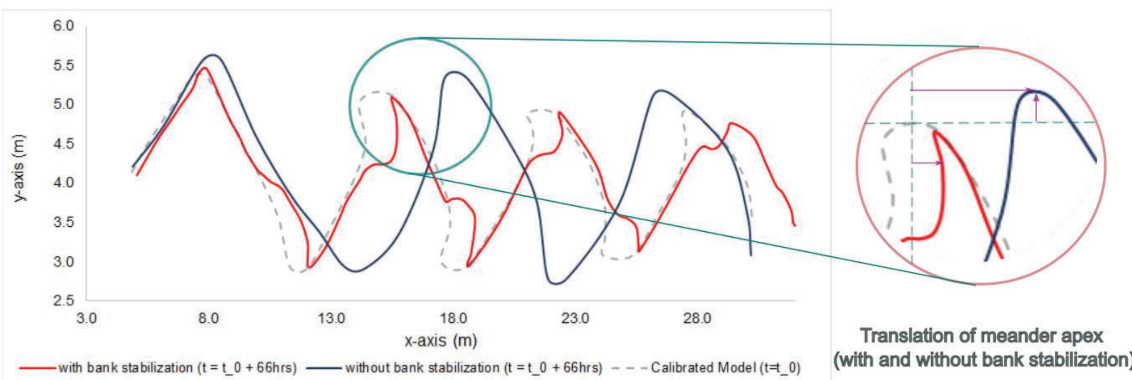

Figure 2: Planform changes (top view of thalweg) with and without bank stabilization

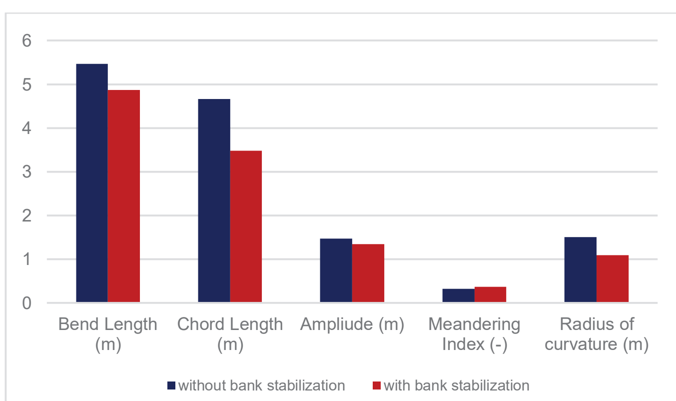

Figure 3: Comparison of modelled planimetric parameters with and without bank stabilization

The results produced by the model qualitatively agree with the experimental results of Friedkin and the field observations in real rivers. The analysis will be extended to analyze and compare the flood conductivity of rivers due to different configuration of bank stabilization. The study can also be extended