

UNDRAINED SHEAR STRENGTH OF  
SOFT CLAY REINFORCED WITH SINGLE  
NON-ENCAPSULATED BOTTOM ASH MIXED  
WITH SILICA FUME COLUMN  
(BASF)

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B. ENG (HONS.) CIVIL ENGINEERING

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## STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at Universiti Malaysia Pahang or any other institutions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kahye', is written on a light-colored rectangular background.

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## ABSTRAK

Tanah liat lembut adalah tanah yang bermasalah yang menyebabkan kegagalan kapasiti gelaas dan penyelesaian yang berlebihan, yang mengakibatkan bangunan yang teruk dan kerosakan tapak. Oleh itu, peningkatan tanah diperkenalkan untuk meningkatkan sifat kejuruteraan tanah liat yang lembut. Dalam kajian ini, abu bawah digunakan untuk menggantikan agregat semulajadi manakala asap silika digunakan sebagai pengikat antara zarah abu bawah. Kajian ini adalah untuk menyiasat peranan abu bawah tidak terkandung tunggal yang bercampur dengan larutan asap silika (BASF) dalam meningkatkan kekuatan ricih kaolin dengan menggunakan model skala makmal. Kaolin digunakan sebagai sampel tanah manakala BASF sebagai lajur bertetulang. Ujian makmal dijalankan untuk menentukan sifat fizikal kaolin tanah liat, abu bawah, dan sampel silika asap. Ujian Mampatan Tidak Terkurung (UCT) juga digunakan untuk menguji kekuatan ricih sampel kaolin bertetulang. Sejumlah tujuh kelompok sampel kaolin telah diuji dan setiap kumpulan terdiri daripada lima spesimen mewakili sampel tanpa tiang BASF, penembusan sebahagian dan penembusan penuh untuk tiang BASF dengan diameter 50mm dan ketinggian 100mm. Diameter lajur bertetulang yang digunakan ialah 14mm dan 20mm dengan ketinggian 60mm, 80mm dan 100mm. Peningkatan kekuatan ricih BASF dengan nisbah penggantian kawasan 7.84% (diameter lajur 14mm) dan 16.00% (diameter lajur 20mm) adalah 58.97%, 88.56%, 69.81%, dan 19.19%, 38.73%, 32.81% pada nisbah penetrasi sampel,  $H_c/H_s$  0.6, 0.8 dan 1.0 masing-masing. Dapat disimpulkan bahawa kekuatan ricih tanah liat lembut dapat ditingkatkan dengan pemasangan abu bawah tunggal yang tidak dikombinasi bercampur dengan lajur asap silika. Walau bagaimanapun, peningkatan kekuatan ricih diameter 14mm meningkat lebih ketara berbanding diameter 20mm disebabkan oleh gangguan kecil yang berlaku kerana sedikit kaolin digerudi dan diambil dari sampel dan menggerakkan tegasan pengurung yang lebih tinggi dalam lajur.

## ABSTRACT

Soft clay is problematic soil that causes bearing capacity failure and excessive settlement, leading to severe buildings and foundation damage. Therefore, soil improvement is introduced to improve the engineering properties of the soft clay. In this study, bottom ash is used to replace the natural aggregate while silica fume is used as binder between bottom ash particles. This research is to investigate the role of single non-encapsulated bottom ash mixed with silica fume column (BASF) in improving the shear strength of kaolin by using laboratory scale model. Kaolin is being used as soil sample while BASF as the reinforced column. Laboratory tests are conducted to determine the physical properties of kaolin clay, bottom ash, and silica fume sample. Unconfined Compression Test (UCT) also used to test the shear strength of the reinforced kaolin samples. A total seven batches of kaolin sample had been tested and each batch consists of five specimens represent sample without BASF column, partially penetration and fully penetration for BASF columns with 50mm in diameter and 100mm in height. The diameter of reinforced column being used are 14mm and 20mm with heights of 60mm, 80mm and 100mm. The improvement of shear strength of BASF with area replacement ratio of 7.84% (14mm column diameter) and 16.00% (20mm column diameter) are 58.97%, 88.56%, 69.81%, and 19.19%, 38.73%, 32.81% at sample penetration ratio,  $H_c/H_s$  of 0.6, 0.8 and 1.0 respectively. It can be concluded that the shear strength of soft clay could be improved by the installation of the single non-encapsulated bottom ash mixed with silica fume column. However, the improvement of shear strength of 14mm diameter was increased more significant compared to 20mm diameter due to the small disturbance occurred since a small amount of kaolin was drilled and taken out from the samples and mobilization of the higher confining stresses in the column.

## TABLE OF CONTENT

### DECLARATION

TITLE	PAGE
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
ABSTRAK	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
TABLE OF CONTENT	v
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
LIST OF SYMBOLS	xiv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xv
<b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background of Research	1
1.2 Problem Statement	4
1.3 Objective of Research	5
1.4 Scope of Research	6
1.5 Significance of Research	8
<b>CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1 Introduction	9
2.2 Soft Clay Soil	9
2.2.1 Soil Texture of Clay	10
2.2.2 Unified Soil Classification System (UCSC)	12

2.2.3	Characteristic of Soft Clay	13
2.2.4	Characteristic of Soft Clay	14
2.3	Kaolin	15
2.3.1	Physical Properties of Kaolin	15
2.3.2	Mechanical Properties of Kaolin	17
2.3.3	Chemical Properties of Kaolin	18
2.4	Bottom Ash	19
2.4.1	Physical Behaviours of Bottom Ash	20
2.4.2	Mechanical Characteristic of Bottom Ash	22
2.4.3	Chemical Characteristics of Bottom Ash	24
2.5	Silica Fume	25
2.5.1	Physical Characteristics of Silica Fume	27
2.5.2	Chemical Characteristics of Silica Fume	28
2.6	Soil Improvement	29
2.7	Types of Ground Improvements	30
2.8	Relation of Undrained Shear Strength Soft Clay Reinforced with Various Dimension of Bottom Ash Column	32
<b>CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY</b>		<b>34</b>
3.1	Introduction	34
3.2	Selection of Ground Improvement Technique	36
3.3	Selection of Material	36
3.4	Sample Collection	36
3.5	Laboratory Works	37
3.5.1	Laboratory Work for Determination of Physical and Mechanical Properties	38



3.6	Reinforcing Kaolin with Single Non-Encapsulated Bottom Ash Mixed with Silica Fume Column	48
3.6.1	Non-Encapsulated Bottom Ash Mixed with Silica Fume Column	48
3.6.2	Kaolin Preparation	48
3.6.3	Installation of Single Non-Encapsulated Bottom Ash Mixed with Silica Fume Column (BASF)	50
3.6.4	Design Parameter	52
<b>CHAPTER 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION</b>		<b>54</b>
4.1	Introduction	54
4.2	Characteristics of Kaolin, Bottom Ash and Silica Fume	55
4.3	Physical Characteristics	56
4.3.1	Particle Size Distribution	56
4.3.2	Specific Gravity	59
4.3.3	Atterberg Limit Test	61
4.4	Mechanical Properties	63
4.4.1	Standard Proctor Compaction Test	63
4.4.2	Permeability	68
4.5	Reinforcing Soft Clay with Single Non-Encapsulated Bottom Ash Mixed with Silica Fume Column	70
4.5.1	Stress-Strain Behaviour under Axial Load	70
4.5.2	Effect of Single Non-Encapsulated Bottom Ash Mixed with Silica Fume Column	72
4.5.3	Effect of Column Height Penetration Ratio ( $H_c/H_s$ )	75
4.5.4	Effect of Height to Column Diameter Ratio ( $H_c/D_c$ )	79
4.5.5	Effect of Volume Replacement Ratio ( $V_c/V_s$ )	83

<b>CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION</b>	<b>88</b>
5.1 Introduction	88
5.2 Conclusions	88
5.3 Recommendations	91
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>APPENDIX A SIEVE ANALYSIS TEST</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>APPENDIX B HYDROMETER TEST</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>APPENDIX C SPECIFIC GRAVITY</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>APPENDIX D ATTERBERG LIMIT TEST</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>APPENDIX E COMPACTION TEST RESULT</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>APPENDIX F FALLING HEAD TEST RESULT</b>	<b>137</b>
<b>APPENDIX G CONSTANT HEAD TEST RESULT</b>	<b>139</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

2.1	Particle size	10
2.2	First letter of USCS	13
2.3	Second letter of USCS	13
2.4	Characteristics of soft clay soil	14
2.5	Particle size distribution of Kaolin S300	16
2.6	Physical properties of kaolin from previous researches	17
2.7	Mechanical properties of kaolin from previous researches	18
2.8	Chemical composition of kaolin	19
2.9	Mechanical properties of bottom ashes, fine aggregate, coarse aggregate and sand	23
2.10	Mechanical properties of bottom ashes from different power plants	24
2.11	Chemical properties of bottom ashes from different plants	25
2.12	Physical characteristics of silica fume	27
2.13	Chemical composition of silica fume from different sources	28
2.14	Shear strength improvement	32
3.1	Test Standard and Methods of Laboratory Testing for Materials	37
3.2	Densification process for installing bottom ash mixed with silica fume column in kaolin specimens	50
3.3	The summary of area ratio ( $A_c/A_s$ ), height penetrating ratio ( $H_c/H_s$ ), column height to column diameter ratio ( $H_c/D_c$ ) and volume replacement ratio ( $V_c/V_s$ )	53
4.1	Properties of kaolin clay	55
4.2	Properties of bottom ash	55
4.3	Properties of silica fume	56
4.4	Properties of bottom ash + 6% Silica Fume	56
4.5	Comparison on the specific gravity of kaolinite from previous researchers	60
4.6	Comparison on the specific gravity of bottom ash from previous researchers	60
4.7	Comparison on the specific gravity of silica fume from previous researchers	60
4.8	Comparison on the optimum moisture content and maximum dry density of kaolin S300 from previous researchers	63
Table 4.9	Comparison on the optimum moisture content and maximum dry density of bottom ash from previous researchers	64

4.10	Comparison on optimum moisture content and maximum dry density of bottom ash mixed with different percentages of silica fume	66
4.11	Comparison on the permeability coefficient of kaolin between current research with previous researchers	68
4.12	Comparison on the permeability coefficient of bottom ash between current research with previous researchers	69
4.13	Maximum deviator stress and axial strain values at different area replacement ratio and different height penetration ratio	71
4.14	Results of unconfined compression test for “control sample” and samples which reinforced with 14 mm and 20 mm diameter of single non-encapsulated bottom ash mixed with silica fume column at different column penetration ratio	73
4.15	Percentage of shear strength improvement of sample reinforced with single non-encapsulated bottom ash mixed with silica fume column	74
4.16	The summary of the equation of correlation of shear strength and improvement shear strength for different types of ratio	87

## LIST OF FIGURES

1.1	Malaysia soft clay soils distribution map	2
1.2	Types of settlement	3
2.1	Textural Triangle Classification Chart	11
2.2	Size range of grains	12
2.3	The microstructure result for kaolin sample	16
2.4	Hydraulic system and mechanical system of bottom ash collections	20
2.5	Particle size distribution curve of bottom ash and natural river sand	21
2.6	Particle size image of bottom ash at 100x magnification	21
2.7	Particle size image of bottom ash at 300x magnification	22
2.8	Schematic of silica fume production for silica metal	26
2.9	Schematic of a smelter for the production of ferrosilicon alloy	26
2.10	Particle size of silica fume	27
2.11	Soil improvement methods applicable to different ranges of soil sizes	31
3.1	Flowchart of project methodology	35
3.2	Sieve plate and shaker	38
3.3	Water-bath temperature	39
3.4	Sedimentation cylinder with hydrometer	40
3.5	The distilled water was topped and leaved for about one hour	41
3.6	Cone penetration for liquid limit test	42
3.7	The portion of sample was pushed against the soil to avoid air trapping	43
3.8	25 free fall flows from 300mm above the sample was applied by using the 2.5kg rammer	44
3.9	Falling head permeability test	45
3.10	Constant head permeability test	46
3.11	Apparatus for Unconfined Compression Test (UCT)	47
3.12	Customized mould set for 50mm diameter with 100 height specimens	49
3.13	Kaolin was added with water and filled the mould in three layers	49
3.14	Drilling hole to install bottom ash mixed with silica fume column	51
3.15	Reinforcing kaolin with single non-encapsulated bottom ash mixed with silica fume column	51
3.16	Detail column arrangement for single non-encapsulated bottom ash mixed with silica fume column	53

4.1	Particle size distribution of kaolin S300 (dry sieve test)	57
4.2	Particle size distribution of kaolin S300 (hydrometer test)	57
4.3	Particle size distribution of bottom ash (dry sieve test)	58
4.4	Particle size distribution of silica fume (dry sieve test)	59
4.5	Kaolin in the plasticity chart (ASTM D2487)	61
4.6	Silica fume in the plasticity chart (ASTM D2487)	62
4.7	Compaction curve of kaolin S300	63
4.8	Compaction curve of bottom ash	64
4.9	Compaction curve of silica fume	65
4.10	Compaction curve of bottom ash mixed with 3% of silica fume	67
4.11	Compaction curve of bottom ash mixed with 6% of silica fume	67
4.12	Compaction curve of bottom ash mixed with 9% of silica fume	68
4.13	Deviator stress against axial strain at failure for 7.84% and 16.00% area replacement of bottom ash mixed with silica fume column at different penetration ratio	71
4.14	Shear strength against height penetration ratio ( $H_c/H_s$ ) for 14mm and 20mm single non-encapsulated bottom ash mixed with silica fume column	76
4.15	Shear strength improvement against height penetration ratio ( $H_c/H_s$ ) for 14mm and 20mm single non-encapsulated bottom ash mixed with silica fume column	76
4.16	Correlation of shear strength against height penetration ratio for 14mm and 20mm single non-encapsulated bottom ash mixed with silica fume column	77
4.17	Correlation of shear strength improvement against height penetration ratio for 14mm and 20mm single non-encapsulated bottom ash mixed with silica fume column	78
4.18	Shear strength against height to column diameter ratio ( $H_c/D_c$ ) for 14mm and 20mm single non-encapsulated bottom ash mixed with silica fume column	79
4.19	Shear strength improvement against height to column diameter ratio ( $H_c/D_c$ ) for 14mm and 20mm single non-encapsulated bottom ash mixed with silica fume column	80
4.20	Correlation of shear strength against height to column diameter ratio for single non-encapsulated bottom ash mixed with silica fume column with diameter 14mm and 20mm against the height of penetration ratio at 0.6, 0.8 and 1.0	81
4.21	Correlation of shear strength improvement against height to column diameter ratio for 14mm and 20mm single non-encapsulated bottom ash mixed with silica fume column	82

4.22	Shear strength against column volume replacement ratio for 14mm and 20mm single non-encapsulated bottom ash mixed with silica fume column	84
4.23	Shear strength improvement against column volume replacement ratio for 14mm and 20mm single non-encapsulated bottom ash mixed with silica fume column	84
4.24	Correlation of shear strength against column volume replacement ratio for 14mm and 20mm single non-encapsulated bottom ash mixed with silica fume column	85
4.25	Correlation of shear strength improvement against volume replacement ratio for 14mm and 20mm single non-encapsulated bottom ash mixed with silica fume column	86

## LIST OF SYMBOLS

$\rho_{d(max)}$	Maximum dry density
$\Delta s_u$	Undrained shear strength improvement
$A_c$	Area of bottom ash mixed with silica fume column
$A_s$	Area of kaolin clay sample
$D_c$	Diameter of bottom ash mixed with silica fume column
$D_s$	Diameter of kaolin clay sample
$e$	Void ratio
$G_s$	Specific gravity
$H_c$	Height of bottom ash mixed with silica fume column
$H_s$	Height of kaolin clay sample
$I_p$	Plastic index
$q_u$	Deviator stress
$R^2$	Correlation cohesion
$s_u$	Undrained shear strength
$V_c$	Volume of bottom ash mixed with silica fume column
$V_s$	Volume of kaolin clay sample
$w$	Moisture content
$w_d$	Dry Soil
$W_L$	Liquid limit
$w_{opt}$	Optimum moisture content
$W_P$	Plastic limit
$W_S$	Shrinkage limit
$w_w$	Wet Soil
$\gamma$	Unit weight
$\gamma_d$	Dry unit weight
$\rho_d$	Dry density



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AASHTO	American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
ASTM	American Society for Testing and Materials
BA	Bottom Ash
BASF	Bottom Ash with Silica Fume
BS	British Standard
CL	Low Plasticity Clay
LOI	Loss of Ignition
MCCP	Milwaukee County Power Plant
OCCP	Oak Creek Power Plant
OCCXP	Oak Creek Expansion Units
PIPP	Presque Isle Power Plant
PPPP	Pleasant Prairie Power Plant
S	Single Non-Encapsulated Bottom Ash Column
SE	Single Encapsulated Bottom Ash Column
SEM	Scanning Electron Microscope
SM-MH	Medium Plasticity Silty Sand
SW	Poor Graded Sand
UCT	Unconfined Compression Test
USCS	Unified Soil Classification System
VAPP	Valley Power Plant

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of Research

According to Al-Rawas and Qamaruddin (1998), Nuhfer said that losses are within \$6 billion and \$11 billion in defects to infrastructure and other infrastructure constructed over clay soil in United State every year. Besides that, sum of damage due to clay soil between Year 1977 and Year 1987 rise above \$300 million in Arab Saudi. Clay soil swells when saturated with water and shrinks when water content falls. The swelling and shrinkage phenomenon affected by clay minerals, water content, dry density, soil formation, loading or weather. The city of Al-Khod has experienced urbanization. The constructions include Sultan Qaboos University, residential areas and other facilities. All the buildings were built based on the standard practice. The clay soil behaviours were not neglected due to the lack of past experience in design engineer and eventually causing evacuation of residents due to severe cracking.

Based on the Figure 1.1, the soft clay soils distribution in Malaysia is shown. There is 20% of the ground in the coastal area of Peninsular Malaysia is soft clay. Soft clay is natural material mainly consists of the flaky particles of mica, various types of clay minerals and organic matters. It composes of tiny particles which are plastically and adhesively. Clay tends to expand and shrink due to the voids which help to store water. Moreover, clay is high compressibility and low permeability which lead to the settlement. When water moisture content high, clay tends to soften and liquefy. The project in Malaysia which involves of clay soil is the embankment region during the East Coast Expressway. The typical very soft clay silts liquefy and have undrained shear strengths between 8-11kPa and depths of 8m (Aljanabi *et al.*, 2013).

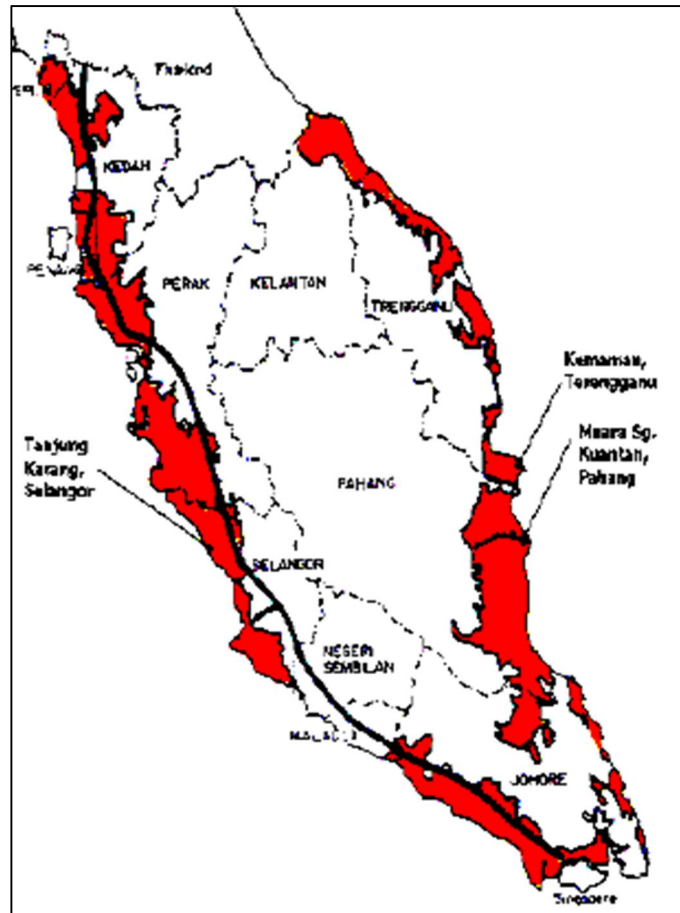


Figure 1.1 Malaysia soft clay soils distribution map

Source: Mohd Yusof *et al.* (2006)

Stability and settlement of a structure or a building is always influenced by the soil type existed at the ground. Historical construction over barren ground such as soft clay may lead to fail in bearing capacity and severe settlement due to its low shear strength and highly compressible. In geotechnical engineering, potential failure to the foundation and cracking of road pavement are also the results of construction over the weak soil. From Figure 1.2, there are three types of settlements which are uniform settlement, tipping settlement which often without cracks and differential settlement with cracks.

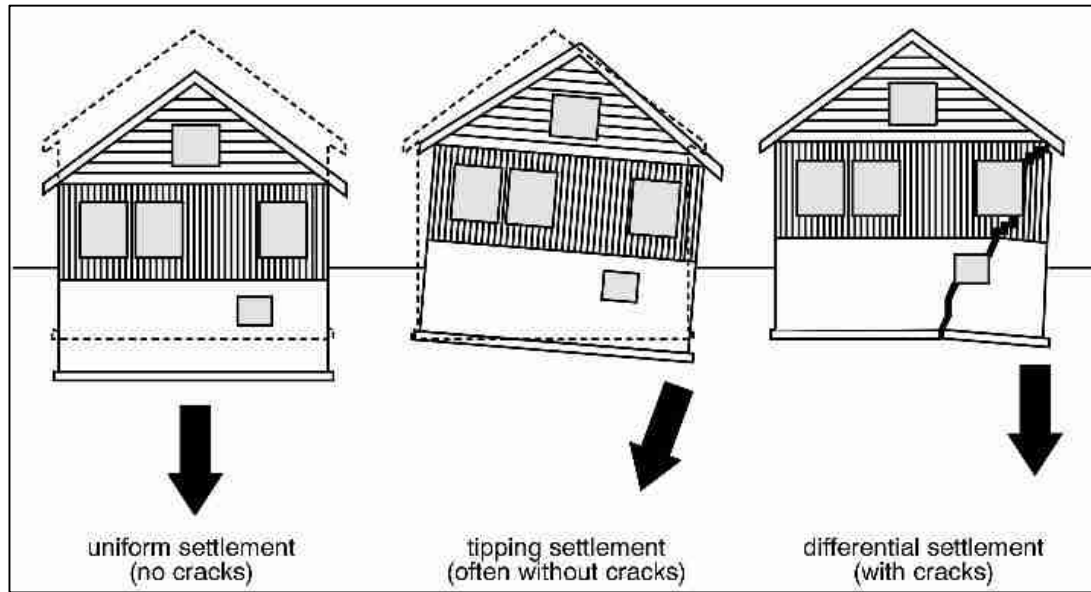


Figure 1.2 Types of settlement

Source: Khaled (2014)

Therefore, few ground improvement mechanisms are introduced to advance the soft clay mechanical and physical properties like preloading sand drains, vibrated granular columns, stone columns and alternative (Suki, 2015). There are a lot of suggestions to improve and modify the ground. For example, densification, dewatering and adding of admixture have invented and practiced century ago. Today, deep soil mixing (DSM) technology is widely practiced on a stimulating concept of improving remarkably natural soils to properly match adopted design requirements. Therefore, problematic excavation can be eliminated and expensive deep foundations methods can be replaced while producing a safe and economic ground engineering solution.

Deep soil mixing (DSM) technology is a sustainable technology as it uses non-toxic binders or industrial by-products as soil admixture. Concurrently, this technology also minimizes spoil volumes compare to jet grouting or classical drilled piles. The selected waste materials are bottom ash (BA) and silica fume. They are a by-product from the electric power plants. These waste materials are disposed and ordinarily possesses no economic value. Bottom ash is rough, porous, glazed, angular, grey in colour and inflammable residual gathered from the bottom part furnaces of burned coal whereas silica fume is extremely fine powder, spherical, grey to off-white in colour, high pozzolanic properties and acts as the filler in cementitious applications.

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