Seepage Analysis for Shurijeh Reservoir Dam Using Finite Element Method

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ABSTRACT

One of the important points in the study stages and along the performance works for the earth dams construction is seepage analysis through foundation and dam body, which is a serious problem for dam designers. So calculation of seepage amount from foundation and dam body and evaluation of control or decrease methods for this problem is essential. Seepage analysis is based on a residual flow scheme involving saturated and unsaturated zones in which the major mesh remains invariant during transient flow. Solution of any seepage problem is reduced to a standard simple routine requiring negligible engineering time. Seepage control is necessary to prevent excessive uplift pressures, sloughing of the downstream slope, piping through the embankment and foundation, and erosion of material by loss into open joints in the foundation and abutments. The under construction Shurijeh dam project is located about 125 km south east of Mashhad, Iran on the Kashafrud River. The 2-D seepage analysis was conducted using computer software, Seep/W, to determine seepage quantities. Results are shown for two conditions: with and without cutoff within the dam foundation.

INTRODUCTION

Accurate calculation of seepage amount from body and foundation in dams is very important for economical and technical calculations. Seepage analysis in an earth dam designing is very important for dam safety, because the water flow in the body and foundation in dam cause creation of pore pressure and seepage forces that if the forces amount isn't in the allowable limit, the dam stability will embroil for example boiling and liquefaction, that may lead to dam failure. With attention to arid climate in country and water shortage in many of their lands and lack of suitable exploitation from resources, it feels need to study in water properties and its control.

So dam's role in water control, storage and conduction is obvious. The statistics show that more than 30 percent from earth dam’s failure is resulting of wrong estimation of seepage. With no considering of water escape from body and foundation in dams in addition to creation of damage and slowing of operation trend in a structure construction, cause to water resources loss. Also this phenomenon duration earthquake occurrence can creates serious problems for dam stability. So seepage control is a management before crisis. Seepage control from dams that located on foundations with sizable permeability is one of the important problems for dam stability and it’s necessary for sure and acceptable servicing in water maintenance. The aim of this research is analysis of the necessity of cutoff beneath the dam, determination of water discharge content that will leak from foundation and body of the dam and estimation of maximum of gradients due to seepage water in body and foundation of the dam.

Dam technical properties

The Shurijeh reservoir dam site is located on the Kashafrud River approximately of 125 km Mashhad, Iran as shown in Figure 1. Dam site is located on geology zone of Koppet- Dagh.

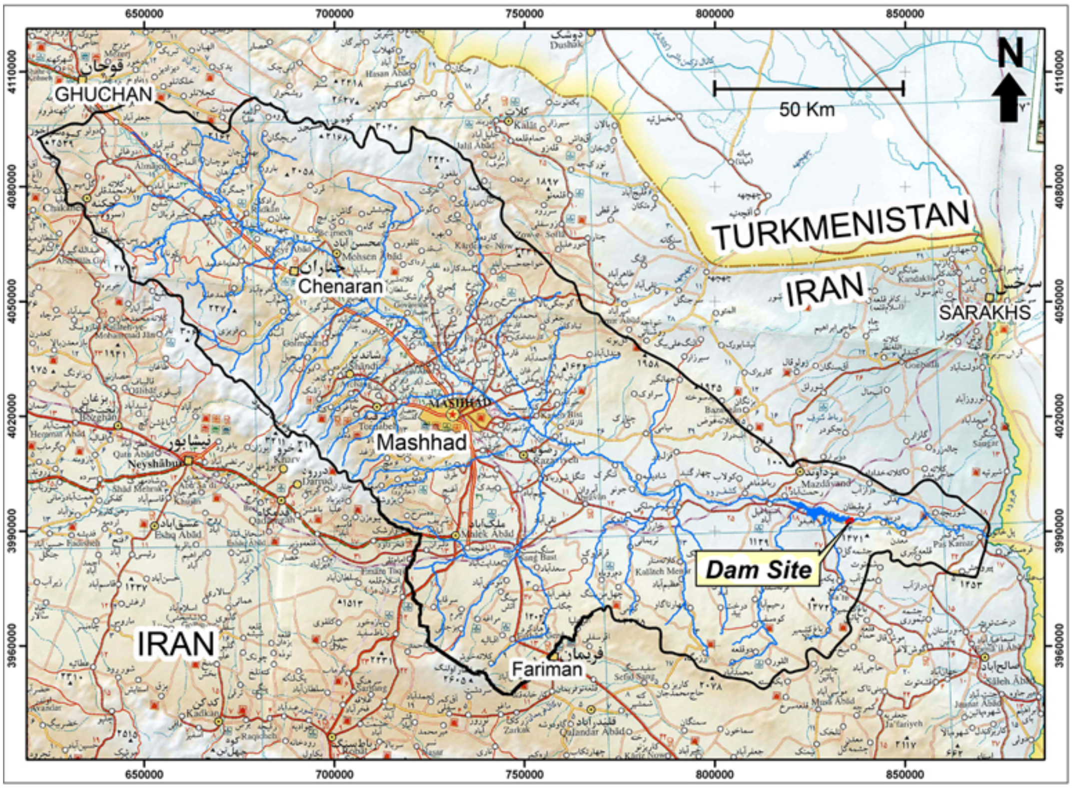

Figure 1. Location of Shurijeh dam site in northern Iran (Toossab Co., 2006).

Type of Shurijeh dam is an earth dam with an asphalt-concrete core. Elevation from river bed is 43 meter and reservoir volume is 240 mm3. The site geology is from the Triassic time period, Aghdarband Formation, which has alternation of shale and sandstone and some conglomerate and tuff (Figure 2). Bedding of this formations are arranged frequently with 67/002 dip and dip direction. The Dam site is located on the northern hillside of the Mozduran anticline, with an east-west axis. Bedding, joints and fault systems due to complex tectonic of region was exerted on rock mass that these faults named F1 and F2 (Figure 2). These faults almost have an east-west direction. Trend of these faults almost are parallel to strike of Mozduran anticline axis. Geological map of dam area and the faults at the dam site are shown in figure 2.

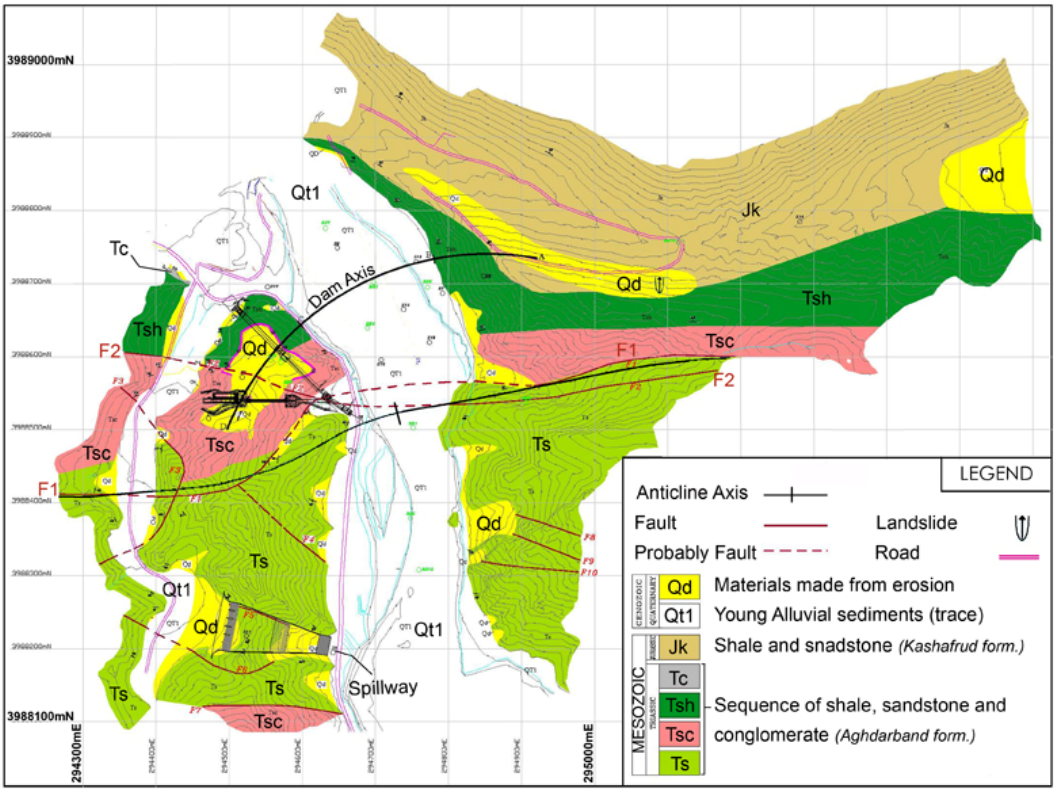

Figure 2. Dam site geological map (Toossab Co., 2006).

Analysis method

Analysis of seepage through the dam was performed by finite element method using SEEP/W software (Geoslope, 2004). Water discharge volumes, pore pressure amount, velocity and water flow through the body and foundation can be determined by this program. Permeability values of the materials in different parts of the body and foundation of the Shurijeh dam are presented in Table 1. The permeability amounts shown in table 1 were determined based on laboratory results on recovery dam core materials.

Table 1. Permeability properties of the Shurijeh Dam.

Materials	Horizontal Permeability (cm/s)	Vertical Permeability (cm/s)
Core	$5*10^{-6}$	$1*10^{-6}$
Alluvial foundation (Coarse Grain)	$1*10^{-3}$~$1*10^{-4}$	$1*10^{-3}$~$1*10^{-4}$
Cutoff	$1*10^{-6}$	$1*10^{-6}$

The dam foundation consists of a maximum 19 meter thickness from alluvial sediments overlying shale and sandstone bedrock. Alluvial sediments consist of two different units, a coarse grain and fine grain. The coarse grain unit contains gravel and sand with a variable percent of clay and silt (SM). This unit is dominant within the alluvial foundation and has a rather high permeability. The fine grain unit results from weathering of bedrock (CL-ML) and one meter thickness in the maximum section of dam. This material will be removed from bottom of dam body, so it was not considered in analysis. The permeability of the alluvial foundation was based on in situ permeability experiments results. Based on these results, permeability of the SM unit is variable between maximum $1*10^{-3}$ cm/s to $2.7*10^{-6}$ cm/s, with an average permeability of $1.7*10^{-4}$ cm/s. In the CL-ML unit, two permeability experiments performed by the Lophran method that permeability equal to $6.8*10^{-7}$ cm/s and $7.9*10^{-6}$ cm/s. Generally in addition to this point that dominant texture of alluvial foundation is coarse grain (SM), so it has considerable permeability and in attention to soil texture, it has capability of erosion therefore needs especial attention due to foundation sealing.

Seepage analysis calculations

Due to the rather high permeability of the alluvial foundation, it was necessary that cutoff be extended to the rock foundation for seepage and gradient control. Comparison of the dam hydraulic with and without a cutoff was performed. The seepage analysis consisted of two stages:

1- Dam section analysis without using a cutoff, to quantify flow and gradient estimation.

2- Dam section analysis using a full cutoff from bottom of core to bedrock to quantify flow and gradient estimation.

Performance of dam without cutoff

Figure 3 shows mesh generation method of the numerical model. In Figure 4 flow lines and potential lines that resulted from the seepage analysis are shown. Also in Figure 5 maximum gradient can be shown. In this manner seepage content from alluvial foundation across the 300 meter dam width is 3913 m^3/day. It is noticeable that average width equal to 300 meter that is more than dam width located on alluvial area, so seepages from dam body on rock abutments in this analysis considered. The external gradient from alluvium along the downstream side of the dam was estimated to be 0.38, with the critical gradient (I_{cr}) equal to 1. The safety factor against boiling phenomenon is 2.6 that were considered unacceptably. Also piping probability of materials of alluvial foundation in this manner will exist. Therefore in attention to these points, it was obvious that a cutoff would be required. In Figure 6 flow vectors are shown.

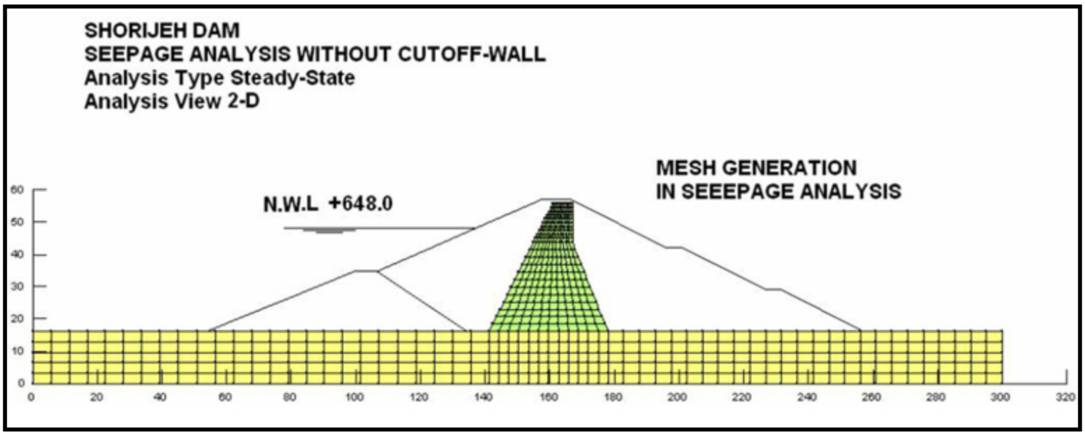

Figure 3. Mesh generation method of numerical model in seepage analysis of dam without cutoff.

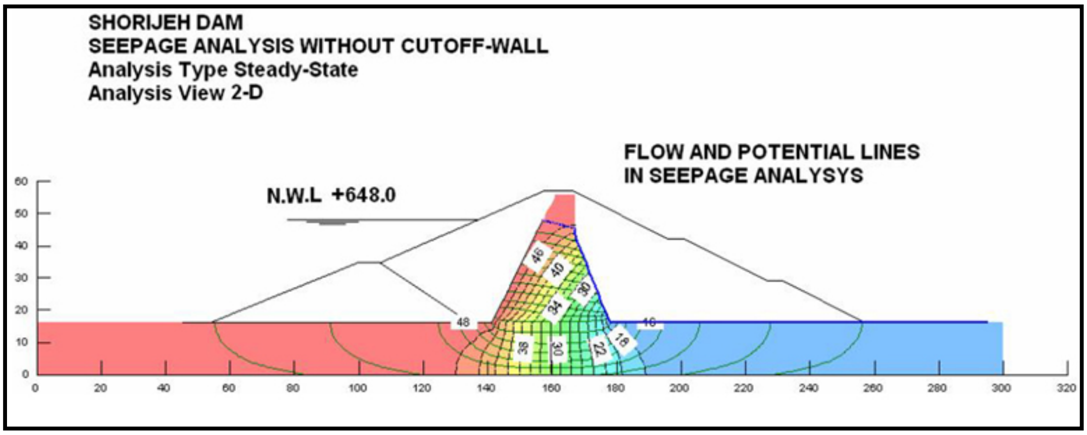

Figure 4. Flow and potential lines in seepage analysis of dam without cutoff.

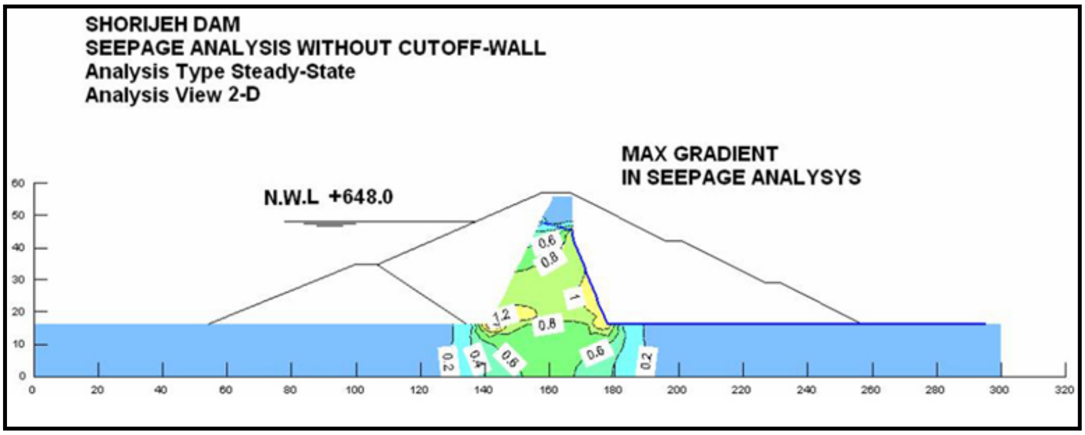

Figure 5. Maximum isogradient curves in seepage analysis of dam without cutoff

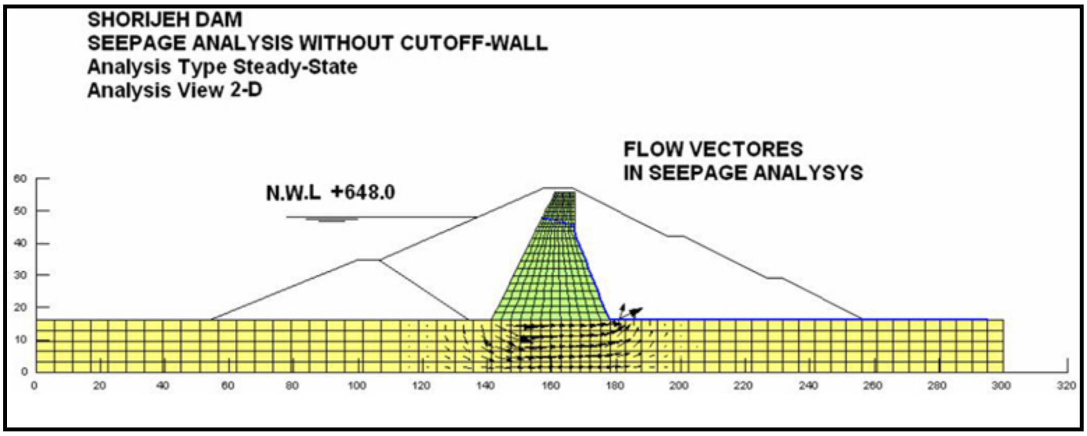

Figure 6. Flow vectors in seepage analysis of dam without cutoff.

Performance of dam with cutoff

The model mesh for the case with a cutoff extending to bedrock is shown in Figure 7. Figure 8 indicates flow and potential lines and Figure 9 shows the maximum gradient lines for this alternative.

In this alternative, seepage from body and foundation will be 138 m^3/day. The maximum external gradient from the alluvium is 0.3, so failure probability in downstream toe won't be a concern. In Figure 10 flow vectors for this alternative are shown.

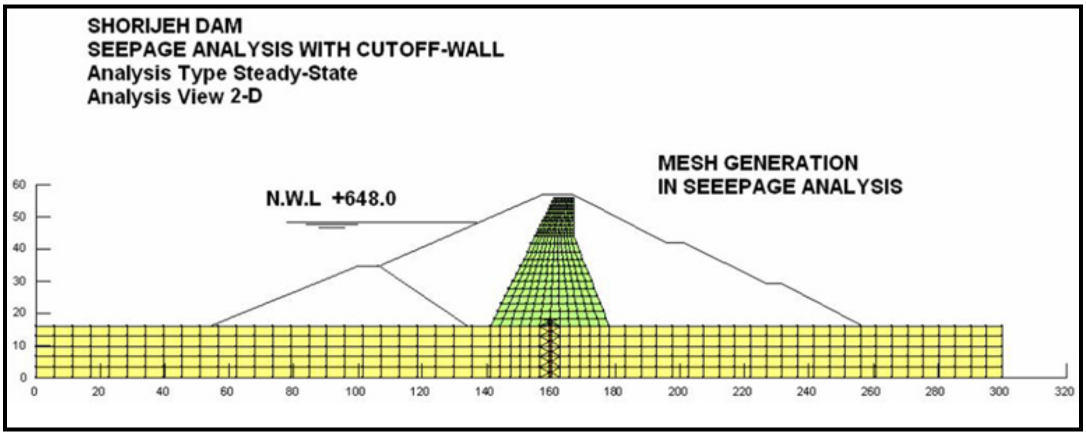

Figure 7. Numerical model mesh generation method in seepage analysis of dam with cutoff.

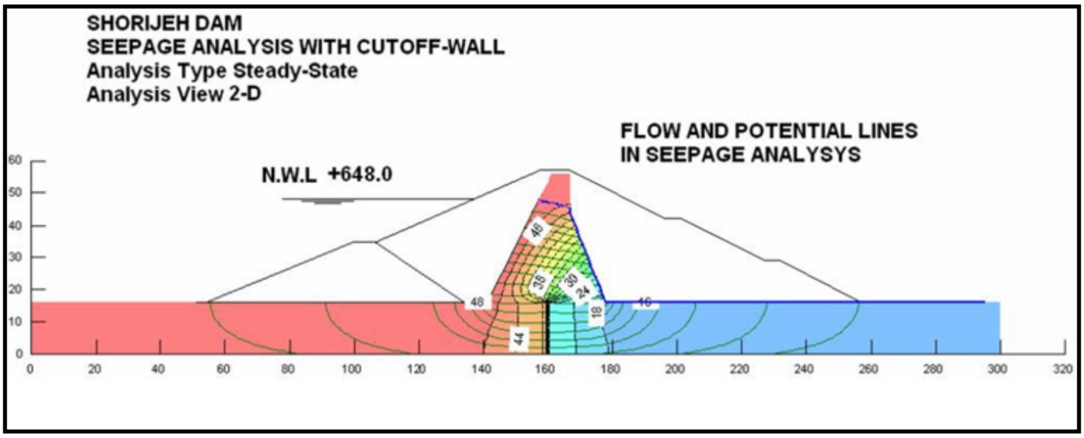

Figure 8. Flow and potential lines in seepage analysis of dam with cutoff.

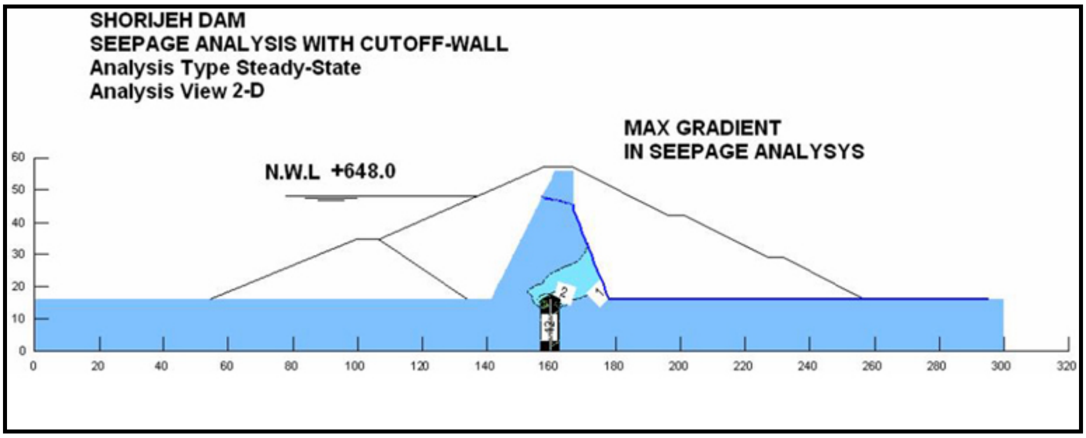

Figure 9. Maximum isogradient curves in seepage analysis of dam with cutoff.

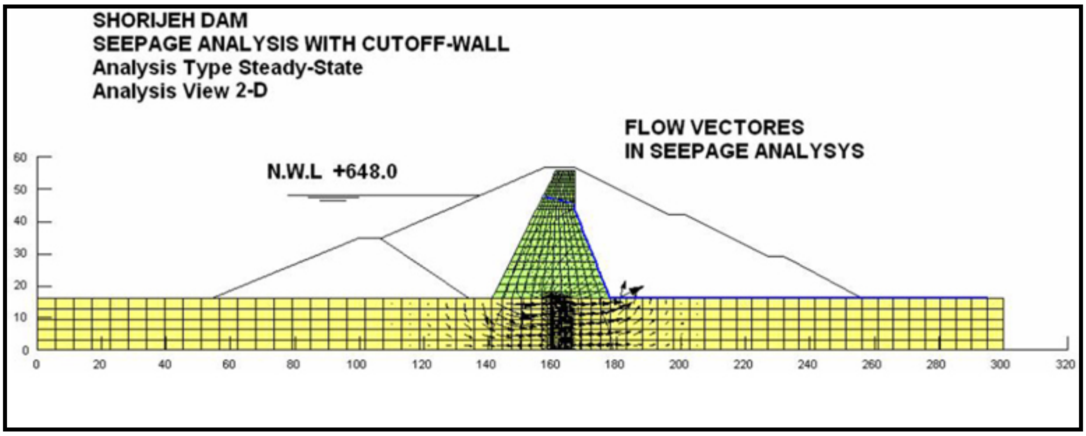

Figure 10. Flow vectors in seepage analysis of dam with cutoff.

CONCLUSION

With comparison of results from analysis of the dam with and without a cutoff it can be concluded that a cutoff to bedrock is necessary, the total water quantity of flow from dam body and foundation in the alluvial area with a cutoff was found to be 138 m^3/day. Acceptable performance for the boiling and piping were determined for the dam with a cutoff.

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