

6th lecture

Hydro-electric Power Station

Constituents of Hydro-electric Plant

The constituents of a hydro-electric plant are

- (1) hydraulic structures
- (2) water turbines and
- (3) electrical equipment.

We shall discuss these items in turn.

1. Hydraulic structures.

Hydraulic structures in a hydro-electric power station include dam, spillways, headworks, surge tank, penstock and accessory works.

(i) Dam. A dam is a barrier which stores water and creates water head. Dams are built of concrete or stone masonry, earth or rock fill. The type and arrangement depends upon the topography of the site. A masonry dam may be built in a narrow canyon. An earth dam may be best suited for a wide valley. The type of dam also depends upon the foundation conditions, local materials and transportation available, occurrence of earthquakes and other hazards. At most of sites, more than one type of dam may be suitable and the one which is most economical is chosen.

(ii) Spillways. There are times when the river flow exceeds the storage capacity of the reservoir. Such a situation arises during heavy rainfall in the catchment area. In order to discharge the surplus water from the storage reservoir into the river on the down-stream side of the dam, spillways are used. Spillways are constructed of concrete piers on the top of the dam. Gates are provided between these piers and surplus water is discharged over the crest of the dam by opening these gates.

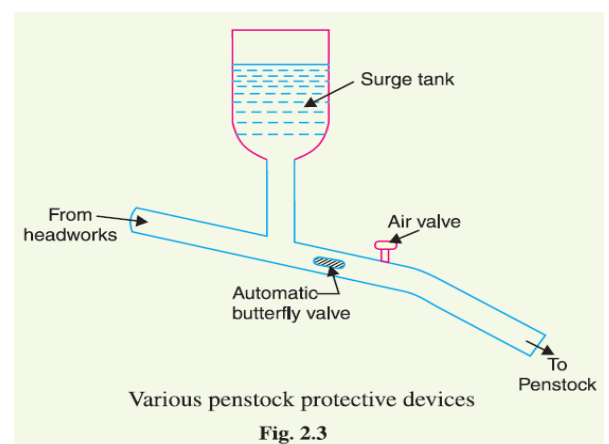
(iii) Headworks. The headworks consists of the diversion structures at the head of an intake. They generally include booms and racks for diverting floating debris, sluices for by-passing debris and sediments and valves for controlling the flow of water to the turbine. The flow of water into and through headworks should be as smooth as possible to avoid head loss and cavitation. For this purpose, it is necessary to avoid sharp corners and abrupt contractions or enlargements.

(iv) Surge tank. Open conduits leading water to the turbine require no* protection. However, when closed conduits are used, protection becomes necessary to limit the abnormal pressure in the conduit. For this reason, closed conduits are always provided with a surge tank. A surge tank is a small reservoir or tank (open at the top) in which water level rises or falls to reduce the pressure swings in the conduit.

A surge tank is located near the beginning of the conduit. When the turbine is running at a steady load, there are no surges in the flow of water through the conduit *i.e.*, the quantity of water flowing in the conduit is just sufficient to meet the turbine requirements. However, when the load on the turbine decreases, the governor closes the gates of turbine, reducing water supply to the turbine. The excess water at the lower end of the conduit rushes back to the surge tank and increases its water level. Thus the conduit is prevented from bursting. On the other hand, when load on the turbine increases, additional water is drawn from the surge tank to meet the increased load requirement. Hence, a surge tank overcomes the abnormal pressure in the conduit when load on the turbine falls and acts as a reservoir during increase of load on the turbine.

(v) Penstocks. Penstocks are open or closed conduits which carry water to the turbines. They are generally made of reinforced concrete or steel. Concrete penstocks are suitable for low heads (< 30 m) as greater pressure causes rapid deterioration of concrete. The steel penstocks can be designed for any head; the thickness of the penstock increases with the head or working pressure.

Various devices such as automatic butterfly valve, air valve and surge tank (See Fig. 2.3) are provided for the protection of penstocks. Automatic butterfly valve shuts off



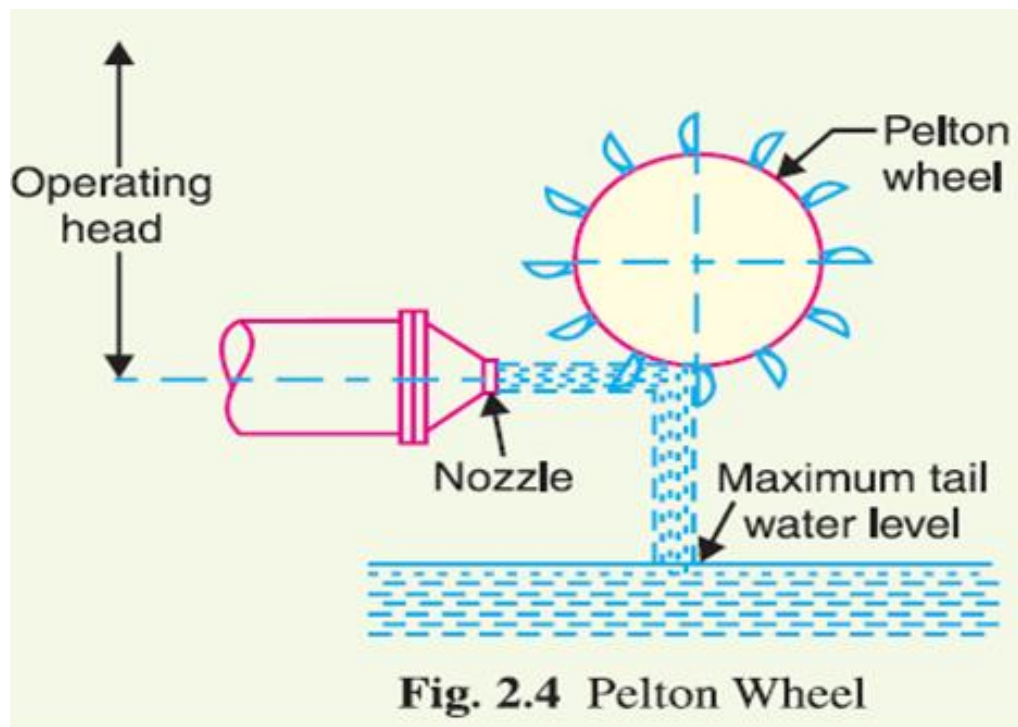
water flow through the penstock promptly if it ruptures. Air valve maintains the air pressure inside the penstock equal to outside atmospheric pressure. When water runs out of a penstock faster than it enters, a vacuum is created which may cause the penstock to collapse. Under such situations, air valve opens and admits air in the penstock to maintain inside air pressure equal to the outside air pressure.

2. Water turbines.

Water turbines are used to convert the energy of falling water into mechanical energy. The principal types of water turbines are :

(i) Impulse turbines (ii) Reaction turbines

(i) **Impulse turbines.** Such turbines are used for high heads. In an impulse turbine, the entire pressure of water is converted into kinetic energy in a nozzle and the velocity of the jet drives the wheel. The example of this type of turbine is the Pelton wheel (See Fig. 2.4).



It consists of a wheel fitted with elliptical buckets along its periphery. The force of water jet striking the buckets on the wheel drives the turbine. The quantity of water jet falling on the turbine is controlled by means of a *needle* or *spear* (not shown in the figure) placed in the tip of the nozzle. The movement of the needle is controlled by the governor. If the load on the turbine decreases, the

governor pushes the needle into the nozzle, thereby reducing the quantity of water striking the buckets. Reverse action takes place if the load on the turbine increases.

(ii) Reaction turbines. Reaction turbines are used for low and medium heads. In a reaction turbine, water enters the runner partly with pressure energy and partly with velocity head. The important types of reaction turbines are :

(a) Francis turbines

(b) Kaplan turbines



A Francis turbine is used for low to medium heads. It consists of an outer ring of stationary guide blades fixed to the turbine casing and an inner ring of rotating blades forming the runner. The guide blades control the flow of water to the turbine. Water flows radially inwards and changes to a downward direction while passing through the runner. As the water passes over the “rotating blades” of the runner, both pressure and velocity of water are reduced. This causes a reaction force which drives the turbine. A Kaplan turbine is used for low heads and

large quantities of water. It is similar to Francis turbine except that the runner of Kaplan turbine receives water axially. Water flows radially inwards through regulating gates all around the sides, changing direction in the runner to axial flow. This causes a reaction force which drives the turbine.

3. Electrical equipment.

The electrical equipment of a hydro-electric power station includes alternators, transformers, circuit breakers and other switching and protective devices.