

UN-Habitat Sri Lanka

Sustainable Construction Using Alternative Technologies

“Fair-faced” block work and finish for walls



About Fair faced block work and finish

- ‘Fair Faced’ walls, without a plaster, is generally used by architects to build aesthetically pleasing walls with wire-cut bricks.
- UN Habitat adapted this technology for cement block walls by improving the finish of in-situ cast blocks and by introducing special tools to improve the finish of walls, thereby reducing the cost, without compromising the appearance.
- The fair faced finish eliminates the need for plaster, thereby reducing sand, cement and skilled labour.



Methodology

- Walls can be built with uniformly cast cement blocks with pointed mortar joints.
- The finish of masonry work is improved by regulating the finish and uniformity of block sizes using good quality steel moulds and solid casting bed, when blocks are cast on site.
- Uniformity of the thickness of the horizontal and vertical mortar joints in between blocks is achieved by using timber guide sticks introduced by UN-Habitat. Local masons were trained in using these special tools.
- To improve the appearance, masonry plaster bands (architraves) can be formed around reveals of openings and edges of walls.
- Cost can be further reduced by forming architraves with stripes made out of fiber-cement ceiling sheets pasted with cement mortar.



Benefits

- Cost effective and eco-friendly method as eliminating plaster reduces the quantity of sand, cement as well as labour used in construction.
- Aesthetically pleasing masonry work is achieved by forming uniform masonry Joints, using specially developed tool- a set of guide sticks.

More information and Related Resources

- Building Environmentally-Friendly Houses in the North of Sri Lanka: <http://unhabitat.lk/news/stories-from-the-field-building-environmentally-friendly-houses-in-the-north-of-sri-lanka-mr-shahul-hameed-anees-puthuweli-village-mannar-district/>
- UN-Habitat Provides Training on Innovative Construction Techniques for Artisans and CBO Members: <http://unhabitat.lk/news/improving-living-conditions-through-housing-news/un-habitat-provides-training-on-innovative-construction-techniques-for-artisans-and-cbo-members-from-mannar-district/>