Crustal structure in southern and central West Bengal using deep seismic sounding explosion data

A. K. GHOSE and S. N. BHATTACHARYA*

Meteorological Office, New Delhi 110 003, India

*Department of Geology & Geophysics, IIT, Kharagpur, India

(Received 1 November 2002, Modified 11 August 2003)

ABSTRACT. Deep seismic sounding (DSS) data provides an excellent opportunity to accurately delineate the crustal structure of a given region owing to the fact that the location and origin time of the source (Chemical explosion) are available. India Meteorological Department is carrying out such surveys since early 1970’s. In this paper, seismic wave velocities in the upper part of the crust in southern and central West Bengal are estimated from three DSS field surveys conducted during 1987-1990. From the analysis of the data it is noted that the sedimentary layer in the region consists of mainly two layers. The first layer is of thickness 1.25 to 1.49 km with P wave velocity of 2.85 to 2.88 km/s and S-wave velocity of 1.71 to 1.77 km/s. Surface wave data show that near Burdwan, the sedimentary layer includes a thin low velocity layer of thickness 250 m at the top. The thickness of lowest sedimentary layer increases southward from 2.32 km to 3.73 km: in this layer the P-wave velocity is between 3.9 & 4.1 km/s. The sedimentary layers are overlying a granitic layer with P-wave velocity of 5.73 to 5.83 km/s.

Key words – Deep seismic sounding, P-wave, S-wave.

1. Introduction

Deep Seismic Sounding (DSS) uses controlled explosions for evaluation of the crustal structure. Such evaluation is superior to earthquakes because of exactness of source parameters. During the years 1987-90, three deep seismic sounding surveys (DSS) were carried out along different profiles of southern and central parts of West Bengal.

(i) In 1987-88, the survey was along east-west profile running from Beliator (Bankura) to Bongaon through Burdwan. Another east-west profile was along Gopali (Kharagpur) to port canning through Tamluk.

(ii) In 1988-89 a north-south profile from Bishnupur to Burdwan was considered.

(iii) In 1989-90, the profile of 1988-89 was continued northward to Kandi.

The shot points during these three field surveys are shown in Figs. 1(a-c). The DSS experiments along with controlled explosions were carried out by National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI). India Meteorological Department (IMD) also participated in this experiment and recorded the seismic waves from these explosions using the seismographs used to record local earthquakes. The results of NGRI methodology were given by Kaila et al. (1992, 1996). The DSS results of IMD give a broad crustal structure which is useful for determining earthquake location (Chaudhury et al. 1984). Further records of IMD seismographs also enabled us to evaluate S-wave velocities.
2. **Geology and tectonic of the study area**

The West Bengal Basin (WBB) forms the western part of the larger Bengal geosyncline province, limited to the west and north by the rocks of the Indian shield and to the east by geosyncline Surma Basin. Just below the western boundary of WBB the Indian shield rocks disappear below a blanket of alluvium. During Permian and early Mesozoic time, the western fringe of the West Bengal Basin were believed to be the part of the Gondwana land. Classic sediments were deposited under deltaic environment during early Miocene-Pliocene time. General stratigraphy of WBB shows that the lower Gondwana formations overlie Archaean basement (Tiwari, 1983).

3. **Observational network and data**

In each of the three field seasons five observatories were commissioned. The locations of the observatories are shown in Figs. 1(a-c) for the seasons 1987-88, 1988-89, 1989-90 respectively. The surveys were conducted during Feb-Apr 1988, May-Jun 1989 and Feb-Mar 1990. Each station was equipped with a short period vertical seismometer (Sprengnether L4C) connected to smoked paper recording system (Sprengnether MEQ-800). The speed of record was 120 mm/min. Digital seismograph with short period vertical seismometer (Sprengnether S-7000) connected to DR-200 recorder was installed at Burdwan during 1989-90 season.
The explosions were conducted by National Geophysical Research Institute and were of charge ranging from 20 kg to 350 kg. Low yield shots were used apparently because of alluvium soil which could render damage to buildings and other structures due to ground vibrations during explosions. Due to low charges, amplitudes of phases were small and were recorded at short distances. Further S phase were rarely recorded. The arrival times of phases recorded by the observatories were obtained. One direct p phase (P1) and two refracted P phases (P2 and P3) were obtained. The ray paths of these three phases are shown in Fig. 2. In some cases direct S phases (S1) were also obtained.

During field survey, explosion time was obtained. Using this explosion time, the travel time (t) of each of the observed phases were obtained and plotted against the distance (D) of the recording station from the shot point. The Figs. 3-5 show these plots for the field seasons 1987 - 88, 1988 - 89 and 1989 - 90 respectively.
### Table 1

| Season   | Layer No. | P-wave vel. (km/s) | Thickness (km) | S-wave vel. (km/s) |
|----------|-----------|--------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 1987-88  | 1         | 2.873              | 1.28           | 1.712             |
|          | 3         | 3.871              | 3.17           | -                 |
|          | 3         | 5.826              | -              | -                 |
| 1988-89  | 1         | 2.879              | 1.25           | 1.768             |
|          | 2         | 3.982              | 3.73           | -                 |
|          | 3         | 5.770              | -              | -                 |
| 1989-90  | 1         | 2.847              | 1.49           | 1.728             |
|          | 2         | 4.070              | 2.32           | -                 |
|          | 3         | 5.727              | -              | -                 |

### 4. Method of analysis

The travel time of direct P-phase *i.e.* $P_1$-phase is

$$ t_1 = \frac{D}{V_1} \quad (1) $$

and travel time of the refracted phases $P_2$ and $P_3$ are

$$ t_2 = \frac{D}{V_2} + 2H_1 \times \sqrt{\frac{V_1^2}{V_1^2 - 1/V_2^2}} \quad (2) $$

$$ t_3 = \frac{D}{V_3} + 2H_1 \times \sqrt{\frac{V_1^2}{V_1^2 - 1/V_3^2}} + 2H_2 \times \sqrt{\frac{V_2^2}{V_2^2 - 1/V_3^2}} \quad (3) $$

Here $V_1$, $V_2$, $V_3$ are P-wave velocities in first, second and third layer; $H_1$ and $H_2$ are thickness of first and second layer. Travel time of $S_1$-phase is given by right hand side of equation (1), but $V_1$ is then the S-wave velocity of the first layer.

A line is drawn through the data of each phase by least square method. These lines may be seen in Figs. 3-5. The inverse of slope of these lines gives $V_1$, $V_2$ and $V_3$. If $I_2$ and $I_3$ are intercepts on $t$-axis by the lines passing through travel times of phases $P_2$ and $P_3$ respectively, then

$$ I_2 = 2H_1 \times \sqrt{\frac{1}{V_1^2 - 1/V_2^2}} $$

$$ I_3 = 2H_1 \times \sqrt{\frac{1}{V_1^2 - 1/V_3^2}} + 2H_2 \times \sqrt{\frac{1}{V_2^2 - 1/V_3^2}} $$

Thus noting these intercepts $I_2$ and $I_3$, we find the thickness $H_1$ and $H_2$ once $V_1$, $V_2$ and $V_3$ are known.

The results are shown in Table 1 and Fig. 7. The structures show two sedimentary layers over a granitic layer. The present P wave velocity structure to the east of Burdwan (1987-88 profile) may be compared with the results of Kaila et al. (1992) who obtained sedimentary layers with P wave velocities about 3.0 and 3.8 km/s which are close to our results. Below the sedimentary layers Kaila et al. (1992) obtained two layers with P wave velocities as 4.8 and 6.0 km/s. However, we obtained P wave velocity as 5.826 km/s below the sedimentary layers.

The present P-wave velocity structure below the north-south profile across Burdwan (1988-89 and 1989-90 profiles) may be compared with results of Kaila et al. (1996) who obtained P wave velocity about 2.7 and 3.7 km/s for sedimentary layers. While we have obtained them as 2.879 and 3.982 km/s in the southern part and as 2.847 and 4.070 km/s in the northern part. Below the sedimentary layers, Kaila et al. (1996) obtained a thin layer of P wave velocity 4.6 km/s overlying a granitic layer of P wave velocity 5.9 km/s. However, our results does not support the thin layer and supports the existence of granitic layer with similar velocity below the sedimentary layer.

### 5. Surface wave dispersion data

Dispersive Rayleigh waves of period 0.4 to 0.95 were recorded from shot point 12 [Fig. 1(c)] on 3 March 1990 and 8 March 1990 by vertical component digital
6. Conclusions

The models obtained in the three field seasons are shown in Fig. 7. It is noted that the sedimentary layer consists of mainly two layers. The first layer is nearly 1.25-1.49 km with P-wave velocity as 2.85-2.88 km/s and S-wave as 1.71-1.77 km/s. Surface layer includes a thin low velocity sedimentary layer at the top with P wave velocity 2.1 km/s; this layer is of thickness 250 m only. The thickness of lowest sedimentary layer increases southward from 2.32 km to 3.73 km; here the P-wave velocity is between 3.9 & 4.1 km/s The sedimentary layers are overlying granitic layer with P-wave velocity

seismograph at Burdwan. The group velocity data obtained from these records are shown in Fig. 6. The structure that fits the dispersion data is also shown in Fig. 6 along with the corresponding theoretical group velocity curve. A better fit could not be achieved presumably because of lateral heterogeneity. The data show a presence of a top thin sedimentary layer of very low P wave velocity 2.1 km/s. This thin sedimentary layer is present only in some parts and could not be traced by body wave refraction data. Such top thin very low P wave velocity 2.0 km/s also obtained by Kaila et al. (1996) under this region. In addition, our results on surface wave data gives a S wave velocity structure for this region.
5.75-5.83 km/s. The present results show similarity with the structure obtained by NGRI (Kaila et al., 1992, 1996) except that a layer with P-wave velocity around 4.8 km/s just above the granitic layer was not discernible.

References

Chaudhury, H. M., Srivastava, H. N., Kamble, V. P., Dube, R. K., Verma, R. K. and Verma, G.S., 1984, “Crustal investigations from explosion data along Kaveli-Udipi section of Peninsular India”, Mausam, 35, 157-162.

Kaila, K. L., Reddy, P. R., Mall., D. M., Venkateswarlu, N., Krishna, V. G. and Prasad, A.S.S.S.R.S., 1992, “Crustal structure of the West Bengal basin, India from deep seismic sounding investigations”, Geophys. J. Int., 111, 45-66.

Kaila, K. L., Murty, P. R. K., Rao, N. M., Rao, I. B. P., Rao, P. K., Sridhar, A. R., Murthy, A. S. N., Rao, V. V. and Prasad, B. R., 1996, “Structure of the crystalline basement in the West Bengal basin”, India as determined from DSS studies, Geophys. J. Int., 124, 175-188.

Tiwari, S., 1983, “The problem of Calcutta gravity high as solution”, Bull. ONGC, 20, 48-53.