

**A COMPUTATIONAL STUDY OF TURBULENT
BUOYANT FLOWS USING RANS MODELLING, PANS
APPROACH AND LES**

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INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY DELHI
MAY 2016**

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BUOYANT FLOWS USING RANS MODELLING, PANS
APPROACH AND LES**

by

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Submitted

In fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
to the



INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY DELHI

May 2016

***This thesis is dedicated to
my late mother Radhika Devi
and
my late uncle Rameshwar Kunwar***

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**A COMPUTATIONAL STUDY OF TURBULENT BUOYANT FLOWS USING RANS MODELLING, PANS APPROACH AND LES**” being submitted by **Mr. Rajesh Kumar** is the report of bonafide research work carried by him under my supervision. This thesis has been prepared in conformity with the rules and regulations of **INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY DELHI**. I further certify that the thesis has attained a standard required for the award of **Doctor of Philosophy** degree of the Institute. The research reported and the results presented in the thesis have not been submitted, in part or full to any other institute or university for the award of any other degree or diploma.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Though only my name appears on the cover of this dissertation, a great many people have contributed to its production. I owe my gratitude to all those people who have made this dissertation possible and because of whom my Ph. D. experience has been one that I will cherish forever. It has been a great journey for last five years in the Department of Applied Mechanics at Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi. First and above all, I would like to thank God, the almighty for providing me this opportunity and granting me the capability to proceed successfully.

My deepest gratitude is to my supervisor Professor Anupam Dewan, who has been a tremendous mentor for me. I have been amazingly fortunate to have an advisor who gave me the freedom to explore on my own, and at the same time the guidance to recover when my steps faltered. His patience and support helped me overcome many crisis situations and finish this dissertation. His insightful comments and constructive criticisms at different stages of my research were thought provoking and they helped me focus my ideas. My sincere thanks to the committee members Prof. S. N. Singh, Dr. Balaji Srinivasan and Dr. B Premachandran for their guidance and valuable suggestions.

I would like to extend my thanks to many friends and colleagues of CFD lab (Rabijit, Bahgwat sir, Vivek, Anubhav, Pritanshu, Anuj and Shrish et al. who have helped me stay sane through these difficult years. Their support and care helped me overcome setbacks and stay focused on my doctoral study. I greatly value their friendship and I deeply appreciate their belief in me. I would like to thank my friend Rajesh Shukla, for motivating me time to time.

At this moment of accomplishment, I would like to pay homage to my mother, late Smt. Radhika Devi, who has been the true inspiration for me and without her blessing; this would not have been possible. I would like to express my heart-felt gratitude to my family including my father Shree Sudarshan Kunwar, my brothers Awadhesh, Kamlesh, Ashok and Atul, my younger sisters Lalsa and Neetu who have been a constant source of love, concern, support and strength all these years. Last but not the least I wish to thank my wife Priyanka who has always stood beside me in good and bad times. She forms the backbone and origin of my happiness. Her love, support and patience without any complaint or regret have enabled me to complete this Ph. D. project. I would also like to thank everyone who knowingly or unknowingly has helped me to finish this journey.

(Rajesh Kumar)

ABSTRACT

Buoyancy effects due to density differences commonly exist in turbulent fluid flows occurring in nature and in engineering applications. A turbulent flow comprises a wide spectrum of time and length scales of motion. Buoyancy plays a significant role in the physics of turbulence. It affects the production and dissipation of turbulence kinetic energy of the flow. Therefore the accuracy of computational simulation of thermal plume fundamentally depends on how well the effects of buoyancy on turbulence are modelled. Primarily three approaches are used to model a turbulent flow, namely, Reynolds-averaged Navier-Stokes (RANS) equations, large eddy simulation (LES) and direct numerical simulation (DNS). Variable resolution method is a recent addition to the turbulence models. The Partially-averaged Navier-Stokes (PANS) approach is a variable resolution method that lies between LES and RANS in terms of computational cost. This method is designed to improve accuracy by resolving more scales of motion than RANS but lesser than LES. This thesis presents steady RANS methodology, unsteady RANS methodology, PANS approach and LES to study turbulent buoyant flows. The present thesis also attempts to elucidate physical features of important mean and turbulent quantities in simplified flow configurations involving buoyancy effects in turbulent flows.

The vertical buoyant jet configuration, which is an example of a free-shear turbulent flow affected by buoyancy, has been studied in the present thesis using RANS, URANS and PANS modelling. A thermal plume is relevant to various industrial applications. An investigation of thermal plume is also important because it can be considered as a test case for modelling of fire which can help designers and safety engineers to develop preventive measures and fire safety systems. A thermal plume is essentially buoyancy-driven flow, therefore it is necessary to incorporate the effects of buoyancy on turbulence in a turbulence model. The effects of buoyancy are included by the addition of a source term. In all the models considered

in the present thesis, the effect of buoyancy is taken into account by the addition of source term in the transport equation of turbulence kinetic energy and turbulent dissipation rate. The source term has been modelled using the simple gradient diffusion hypothesis (SGDH) and the generalized gradient diffusion hypothesis (GGDH). The SGDH tends to under-estimate the spread rate of vertical thermal plumes and over-estimate the spread rate of horizontal, stably-stratified flows. In the present thesis, the models based on the buoyancy modifications via GGDH hypothesis have been proved to be more accurate in capturing the mean flow properties, spread rate and turbulent properties. The present PANS model is shown to enhance the computing capability significantly in predicting buoyancy-driven flows compared with those of RANS and URANS models. Finally, various important unsteady flow structures of turbulent thermal plume have been visualized from the instantaneous flow statistics obtained using the PANS simulations. Qualitative and quantitative comparisons with reported experimental results are also performed, demonstrating the ability of the above-mentioned techniques to accurately simulate buoyancy and stratification effects in turbulent flows.

Four existing LES sub-grid scale (SGS) models for buoyant turbulent flows are assessed in the thesis by comparing the results with experimental data reported in the literature for thermal-driven square cavity. Understanding the flow physics of this configuration is of interest for various industrial applications, such as, cooling of electronic equipment, solar collectors, air ventilation of buildings, cooling of nuclear reactors, etc. Furthermore, computational study of a cavity flow is considered as a benchmark case to develop new turbulence closure models and new computational algorithms. In addition to serving as an excellent test case for SGS models, this problem demonstrates interesting phenomena related to the interaction between buoyancy and wall-bounded turbulence. Particularly, the effect of buoyancy on the vertical wall boundary layer is studied. Improvements are made to the one

equation eddy viscosity SGS model by taking into account the contribution of the buoyant force in the SGS production.

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NOMENCLATURE

B	production of turbulence due to buoyancy, $\text{kg}/(\text{ms}^3)$
g	acceleration due to gravity, m/s^2
h	enthalpy, J/Kg
k	turbulent kinetic energy, m^2/s^2
p	total pressure, N/m^2
p_d	component of total pressure, $p_d = p - \rho g \cdot X$, N/m^2
P	production of turbulence due to shear, $\text{kg}/(\text{ms}^3)$
r	radius, m
S	strain rate, s^{-1}
S_{ij}	strain rate tensor, s^{-1}
T	temperature, K
u_i	velocity component in the i^{th} direction, m/s
W	mean velocity in the axial direction, m/s
z	axial distance, m

Greek symbols

δ_{ij}	Kronecker delta, dimensionless
ε	turbulent dissipation rate, m^2/s^3
ω	specific dissipation rate, s^{-1}
μ	molecular viscosity, $\text{kg}/(\text{ms})$
μ_t	turbulent viscosity, $\text{kg}/(\text{ms})$
ρ	density, kg/m^3
τ_{ij}	shear stress tensor, N/m^2
σ_t	turbulent Prandtl number, dimensionless

Subscripts

0	quantities at the source
∞	properties of the ambient

i vector direction
c quantities at the centerline

Superscripts

$\bar{\varphi}$ time-averaged quantity
 φ' fluctuation (Reynolds statistics)
 $\tilde{\varphi}$ Favre-averaged quantity
 φ'' fluctuation (Favre statistics)

Abbreviation

LES= large eddy simulation

RANS=Reynolds-averaged Navier Stokes

SGS=sub-grid stress

SGDH=simple gradient diffusion hypothesis

GGDH=generalized gradient diffusion hypothesis