Relation between Stream Function and Velocity Potential

- a stream function is that the difference of its values at two points
- represent the flow across any line joining the points. Thus if two lie on the same stream line, $then, \frac{\partial \phi}{\partial y} = -\frac{\partial \phi}{\partial z}$
- there being no flow across a stream line, the difference between the stream functions $\psi 1$ and $\psi 2 = 0$;
- this means the streamline is given by:
- ψ = constant.
- Similarly, φ = constant, represents a case for which the velocity potential is same at every point, and hence it represents an equipotential line.
- Let, two curves φ = constant and ψ = constant intersect each other at any point. At the point of
- intersection the slopes are:

For the curve
$$\phi = constant$$
. Slope $= \frac{\partial y}{\partial x} = \frac{\left(\frac{\partial x}{\partial x}\right)}{\left(\frac{\partial \phi}{\partial y}\right)} = \frac{-u}{-v} = \frac{u}{v}$
For the curve $\psi = constant$. Slope $= \frac{\partial y}{\partial x} = \frac{\left(\frac{\partial \psi}{\partial x}\right)}{\left(\frac{\partial \psi}{\partial y}\right)} = \frac{-v}{+u} = -\frac{v}{u}$

Now, product of the slopes of these curves

$$= \frac{u}{v} \times - \frac{v}{u} = -1$$

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• It shows that these two sets of curves, viz stream lines and equipotential lines intersect each other orthogonally at all points of intersection.

 $u = -\frac{\partial \phi}{\partial x} = \frac{\partial \psi}{\partial y}$

- Verify whether the following functions are valid potential functions:
- (i) $\phi = A(x^2 y^2)$ (ii) $\phi = A \cos x$

Solution. (i)
$$\phi = A(x^2 - y^2)$$
:
 $\frac{\partial \phi}{\partial x} = 2Ax$; $\frac{\partial \phi}{\partial y} = -2Ay$
 $\frac{\partial^2 \phi}{\partial x^2} = 2A$; $\frac{\partial^2 \phi}{\partial y^2} = -2A$
 $\frac{\partial^2 \phi}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 \phi}{\partial y^2} = 2A + (-2A) = 0$
Hence, $\phi = A(x^2 - y^2)$ is a valid potential function (Ans.)
(ii) $\phi = A \cos x$:
 $\frac{\partial \phi}{\partial x} = -A \sin x$; $\frac{\partial \phi}{\partial y} = 0$
 $\frac{\partial^2 \phi}{\partial x^2} = -A \cos x$; $\frac{\partial^2 \phi}{\partial y^2} = 0$
 $\frac{\partial^2 \phi}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 \phi}{\partial y^2} = -A \cos x \neq 0$

Hence, $\phi = A \cos x$ is not a valid function (Ans.)

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Which of the following functions represent possible irrotational flow? (i) $\psi = A(x^2 - y^2)$ (ii) $\psi = xy$ (iii) $\phi = \left(r - \frac{2}{r}\right)\sin\theta$ (iv) $\phi = Ur\cos\theta + \frac{U}{r}\cos\theta$

Solution. For an irrotational fluid flow phenomenon ϕ as well ψ satisfy Laplace equation. (i) $\psi = A(x^2 - y^2)$:

$$\frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial x} = 2Ax; \quad \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial y} = -2Ay$$

$$\frac{\partial^2 \Psi}{\partial x^2} = 2A; \quad \frac{\partial^2 \Psi}{\partial y^2} = -2A$$

$$\frac{\partial^2 \Psi}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 \Psi}{\partial y^2} = 2A - 2A = 0$$
Hence, $\Psi = A(x^2 - y^2)$ represents a possible irrotational flow (Ans.)
ii) $\Psi = xy:$

$$\frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial x} = y; \quad \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial y} = x$$

$$\frac{\partial^2 \Psi}{\partial x^2} = 0; \quad \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial y} = 0$$

$$\therefore \qquad \frac{\partial^2 \Psi}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 \Psi}{\partial y^2} = 0$$

Hence, $\psi = xy$ represents a possible irrotational flow. (Ans.)

$$(iii) \phi = \left(r - \frac{2}{r}\right) \sin \theta$$
:

Laplace equation in radial coordinates (r; θ) is given as:

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{1}{r} \frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial r} + \frac{\partial^2 \Phi}{\partial r^2} + \frac{1}{r^2} \frac{\partial^2 \Phi}{\partial \theta^2} &= 0 \\ & \frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial r} = \left(1 + \frac{2}{r^2}\right) \sin \theta \\ & \frac{\partial^2 \Phi}{\partial r^2} &= -\frac{2}{r^3} \sin \theta \\ & \frac{\partial \Phi}{\partial \theta} = \left(r - \frac{2}{r}\right) \cos \theta \\ & \frac{\partial^2 \Phi}{\partial \theta^2} &= -\left(r - \frac{2}{r}\right) \sin \theta = \left(\frac{2}{r} - r\right) \sin \theta \\ & L.H.S. \text{ of Laplace equation is:} \\ & \frac{1}{r} \times \left(1 + \frac{2}{r^2}\right) \sin \theta - \frac{2}{r^3} \sin \theta + \frac{1}{r^2} \left(\frac{2}{r} - r\right) \sin \theta \\ &= \sin \theta \left(\frac{1}{r} + \frac{2}{r^3} - \frac{2}{r^3} + \frac{2}{r^3} - \frac{1}{r}\right) \\ &= \sin \theta \left(\frac{2}{r^3}\right) \neq 0 \end{aligned}$$

Hence, the given function doesnot represent any possible irrotational flow. (Ans.)

- The velocity components in a fluid flow are given by: u = 2xy; $v = a^2 + x^2 y^2$
- (i) Show that the flow is possible. (ii) Derive the relative stream function

Solution. Given: u = 2xy; $v = a^2 + x^2 - y^2$ Velocity components (i) $\frac{\partial u}{\partial x} = 2y$; $\frac{\partial v}{\partial y} = -2y$

$$\frac{\partial u}{\partial x} + \frac{\partial v}{\partial y} = 2y + (-2y) = 0$$

The continuity equation for steady, incompressible flow is satisfied.

 $u = \frac{\partial \psi}{\partial v} = 2xy$

 $f'(x) = -(a^2 + x^2)$

Hence, flow is possible. (Ans.)

(ii) The stream function \u03c6 is related to u and v as:

or,

Hence,

or,

$$f(x) = -a^2x - \frac{x^3}{3} + \text{constant}$$

 $\psi = \int 2xy \ dy = xy^2 + f(x)$

 $-\frac{\partial \psi}{\partial x} = -y^2 - f'(x) = v = a^2 + x^2 - y^2$

Inserting for f(x) in eqn. (i) we get:

$$\psi = xy^2 - ax^2 - \frac{x^3}{3} + \text{constant}$$

Thus, the relative
$$\psi = xy^2 - a^2x - \frac{x^3}{3} + \text{constant}$$
 (Ans.)

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A flow is described by the stream function $\psi = 4xy$. Locate the point at which the velocity vector has a magnitude 7 units and makes an angle of 150° with X-axis.

...Given

Solution. Stream function, $\psi = 4xy$

The velocity components for the given flow field are:

$$u = \frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial y} = \frac{\partial}{\partial y} (4xy) = 4x$$

$$v = -\frac{\partial \Psi}{\partial x} = -\frac{\partial}{\partial x} (4xy) = -4y$$

$$V = \sqrt{u^2 + v^2} \text{ or } 7 = \sqrt{(4x)^2 + (-4y)^2} = 4\sqrt{x^2 + y^2} \dots(i)$$

$$\tan \theta = \frac{v}{u} \text{ or } \tan 150^\circ = \frac{-4y}{4x} = -\frac{y}{x}$$

$$-0.577 = -\frac{y}{x} \text{ or } y = 0.577 x$$

Also,

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$$-0.577 = -0.577$$

Substituting for y in eqn. (i), we get:

$$7 = 4\sqrt{x^2 + (0.577x)^2} = 4.62 x$$
$$x = \frac{7}{4.62} = 1.515 \text{ (Ans.)}$$