

Variable Threshold MOS Circuits

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ABSTRACT: Dynamic threshold MOS (DTMOS) circuits provide low leakage and high current drive, compared to CMOS circuits, operated at low voltages. This paper proposes a modified DTMOS approach, called Variable threshold MOS (VTMOS) approach. The VTMOS is based on operating the MOS devices with an appropriate substrate bias which varies with gate voltage, by connecting a positive bias voltage between gate and substrate for NMOS and negative bias voltage between gate and substrate for PMOS. With VTMOS, there is a considerable reduction in operating current and power dissipation, while the remaining characteristics are almost the same as those of DTMOS. Results of our investigations show that VTMOS circuits improves the power up to 50% when compared to CMOS and DTMOS circuits, in sub threshold-region. The performance characteristics of VTMOS circuits - The Power dissipation, Propagation delay and Power delay product with the substrate bias have been evaluated through simulation using H spice. The dependency of these parameters on frequency of operation has also been investigated.

Keywords: Sub- threshold, Dynamic threshold MOS Inverter, Propagation delay, Noise-margin, Variable threshold MOS Inverter, Power dissipation.

I. INTRODUCTION

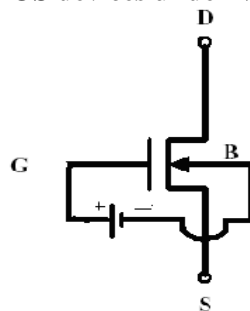
Over the past twenty years, semi conductor industry emerged considerably and demand for VLSI has grown all over the world. During the recent years, there is a great demand for portable devices like cellular phone, palm top computers, GPRS receivers, pocket calculator, and pacemakers, they all demand for low power. Hence low power design has emerged as a very attractive and fast development field. The limited battery life time demands for the reduction of power consumption of portable devices. High performance digital systems such as DSP, microprocessor's, and other applications insists for low power design. Besides this, the environment also demands for low power design. As the electronic equipment usage increases, the power consumption and the cost for excessive cooling system increases.

In view of this it is essential to minimize the power dissipation. The various techniques that are employed to reduce the power dissipation are recycling the energy that might be stored in nodal capacitances, reduction in transitions (0 to 1 or 1 to 0), reduction in voltages and currents, and so on. The techniques based on operation at very low currents usually below the normal conduction region, especially in FET based circuits is known as sub threshold operation. This has attracted several investigators, as it has flexibility to choose their own logic levels and power dissipation. This paper is only an attempt to modify the normal sub threshold operating condition to reduce the power dissipation without affecting the performance. The modified operation that is suggested is based on biasing the substrate of FET dynamically in tune with the gate voltage. This we termed as variable threshold MOS operation. It has been shown that VTMOS operation can result in power saving of up to 50% compared to CMOS operation and can be used in cascaded circuits like CMOS circuits.

1.1 Current voltage characteristics of NMOS and PMOS Transistors under VTMOS operating conditions

in sub-threshold region: To evaluate the behavior of NMOS and PMOS devices under VTMOS operating conditions, the current voltage characteristics are measured and plotted using H spice simulation tool. The transistor's are chosen from 65nm technology. The threshold voltage for NMOS and PMOS devices are 0.22v and -0.22v respectively. The width of NMOS (W_n) and PMOS (W_p) is chosen as 200nm and 400nm respectively. The supply voltage is taken as 0.2v which is below the threshold of both the devices.

1.1.1 Current voltage characteristics of NMOS devices under VTMOS operating conditions:



(a) n-MOSFET

Figure 1

As shown in Figure (1), the NMOS transistor is connected to gate through V_{AN} , which bias the substrate negative with respect to gate. For different values of V_{AN} starting from 0 to 0.2v, the current voltage characteristics of NMOS, i.e Id versus V_{gs} are plotted and given in Figure(2).

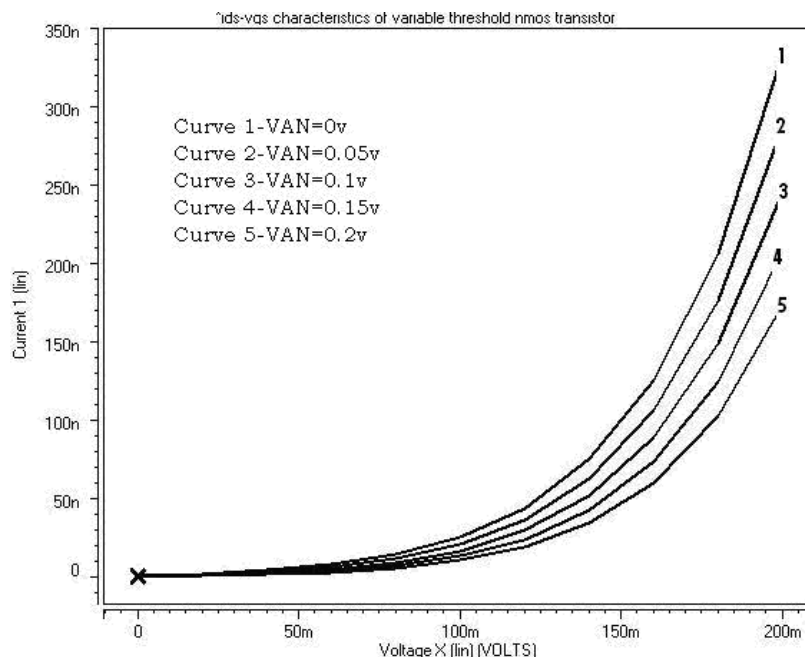


Figure: 2 Ids-Vgs curves of Variable Threshold NMOS Transistor (V_{AN} varying from 0(top)to 0.2v(bottom))

When V_{AN} is varied from 0 to 0.2v, the transistor substrate bias is dynamically adjusted, depending on the gate voltage, causing the threshold voltage of the device to adjust dynamically. The variation in threshold voltage causes variation in leakage currents and power dissipation.

The VTNMOS transistor is operated in two modes i.e ON mode and OFF mode .As the entire operation is limited to sub threshold region , for a given V_{AN} , the 'ON' condition is defined for NMOS transistor when $V_{gs}=0.2v$. Similarly for a given V_{AN} , 'OFF' condition is defined for NMOS transistor when $V_{gs} = 0v$. In the 'ON' mode, when $V_{AN}=0.2v$ and $V_{gs}=0.2v$, then the substrate bias of NMOSFET transistor is switched to 0v. In this condition, the VTNMOS transistor is similar to NMOS ON transistor operation. Hence the drain current of VTNMOS is same as NMOS transistor under normal conditions and is found to be 171nA.

For the condition, that $V_{AN}=0v$ and $V_{gs}=0.2v$ (DTNMOS condition), the source and substrate of MOSFET is forward biased, which implies that the effective threshold voltage of the device is reduced. hence one expects much higher current than the current that flows under normal NMOS operation ($V_{gs}=0.2v$). This current has been found to be 334nA from the Figure (2).

The OFF condition of the transistor in this article is defined as the condition in which $V_{gs} = 0$ and V_{AN} is varied from 0 to 0.2v. when $V_{gs}=0v$ and $V_{AN}=0V$, the condition corresponds to normal NMOS transistor .when $V_{AN}=0.2v$, the substrate is biased negative w.r.t source by -0.2v and hence ,the threshold voltage increases and the current decreases further .From the Figure(2), the value of current for $V_{gs}=V_{AN}=0$ is measured as 1.4nA and for $V_{gs}=0v$ and $V_{AN}=0.2v$ it is 550pA, which is about one-third of the leakage current ,when the substrate is biased at 0v.

1.1.2 The current voltage characteristics of PMOS under VT MOS operating conditions:

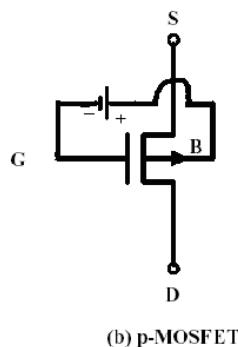


Figure 3

The PMOS device under VT MOS operating condition is shown in Figure (3). It may be seen that the substrate is positively biased w.r.t gate.

Figure 4(a) shows the I_{ds} versus V_{gs} curves of PMOS device under VT MOS operating conditions, for different values of V_{AP} , starting from 0 to -0.2v. The V_{ds} is considered as -0.2v and V_{gs} is varied from 0 to -0.2v.

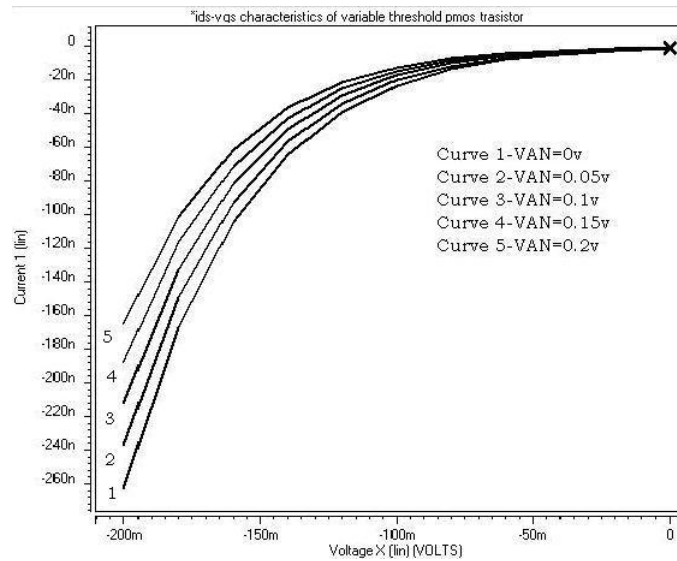


Figure: 4 (a) I_{ds} - V_{gs} curves of Variable Threshold PMOS Transistor (V_{AP} varying from 0(bottom)to 0.2v(top))

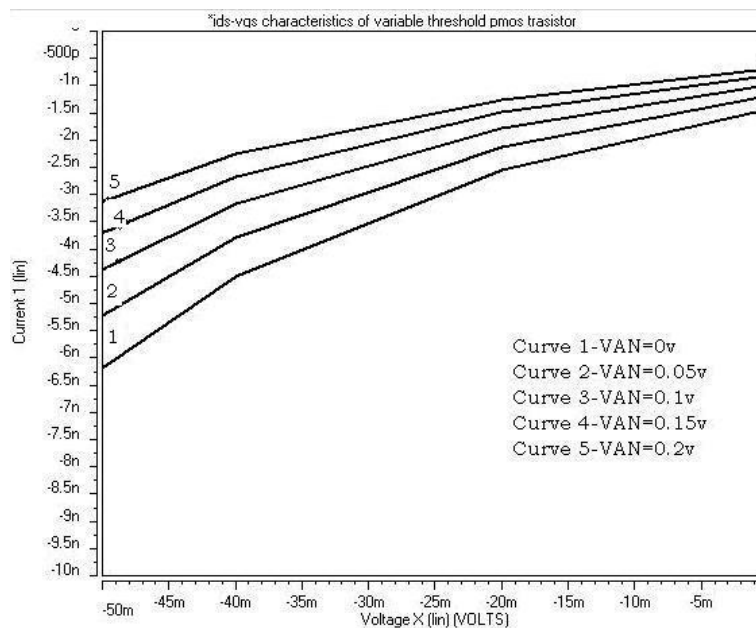


Figure: 4(b) I_{ds} - V_{gs} curves of Variable Threshold PMOS Transistor (V_{AP} varying from 0(bottom)to 0.2v(top))- zoomed version to Measure I_{off} current

For different values of V_{AP} starting from 0 to -0.2v, the current voltage characteristics of PMOS is plotted.

When V_{AP} is varied from 0 to -0.2v, the PMOS transistor's threshold voltage is varied dynamically as in the case of NMOS device. The ON and OFF conditions for PMOS device are similar to that of NMOS device. Considering the ON condition of VT PMOS transistor, for $V_{AP}=0v$ and $V_{gs}=-0.2v$ (DTP MOS condition) it is observed that there is highest drain current of $I_{on}=-262nA$. When $V_{AP}=-0.2v$ and $V_{gs}=-0.2v$, lowest I_{on} drain current $I_{on}=-164nA$ is recorded for VT PMOS and is observed from Figure 4(a).

Considering the PMOS off condition, it is observed from the Figure 4(b), that for $V_{AP} = 0 v$, the I_{off} current is 1.4nA and for $V_{AP} = 0.2v$, the I_{off} current is less and is measured as 695pA. thus the current levels (I_{on} & I_{off}) get reduced with increase in bias voltage when VT PMOS substrate is positively biased with respect to gate.

II. VT MOS SEQUENTIAL CIRCUITS

Sequential circuits are those in which the output depends on the present inputs and previously applied inputs. As mentioned earlier this sequential circuits are generally realized by making use of combinational circuits with appropriate positive feedback. VT MOS based sequential circuits are realized using VT MOS combinational circuits. The transistor's for

sequential circuits are chosen from 65nm technology. The width of PMOSFETS and NMOSFETS are chosen as 400nm and 200nm respectively. The supply voltage is taken as 0.2v which is below the threshold of the devices.

For different values of V_{AN} starting from 0 to 0.2v and corresponding V_{AP} of same magnitude from 0 to -0.2v, the performance parameters of VT MOS sequential circuits– average power dissipation, propagation delays, rise and fall time delay, power-delay –product and frequency response have been obtained through simulation .The VT MOS JK master slave flip flop is designed and performance analysis is done in the following sections . The performance results of the VT MOS JK master slave flip flop are compared with the CMOS JK master slave flip flop circuits.

2.1 VT MOS JK master slave flip flop:

The VT MOS JK master slave can be constructed with a pair of JK flip flops using VT MOS NAND gates. The circuit diagram, Truth table and operation of the circuit is given in Figure 5 and Table (1)below. The first flip flop serves as master and second flip-flop serves as slave. There is a feedback connection from the output of second to the input of first. The master is enabled for clock=1 and slave is enable for clock = 0.

Circuit Diagram:

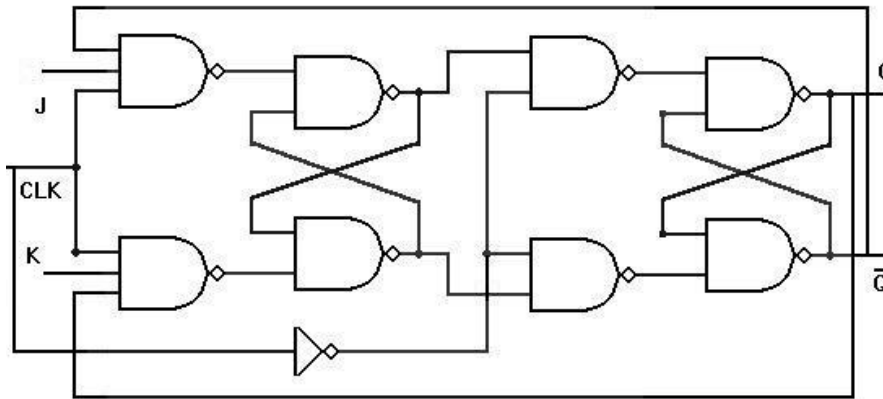


Figure 5

Truth table:

Inputs			Outputs	
Clock	J	K	Q	\bar{Q}
×	×	×	0	1
↑	0	0	No change	
↑	0	1	0	1
↑	1	0	1	0
↑	1	1	Toggle	

Table 1

When clock = 1, the master is enabled, and output of master responds to the input J and K according to the truth table. When clock = 0, the master is disabled and slave is enabled. The state of master output is now transferred to slave output. the master slave flip flop functions properly only when the clock width is larger than the propagation delay time through the master flip flop. The performance of this latch in terms of power dissipation , logic levels ,propagation delay ,rise and fall time delays ,frequency response have been analyzed and described below.

2.2 Input output wave forms for VT MOS JK master slave flip flop circuit:

Function of the VT MOS JK master slave flip flop circuit has been compared with conventional JK master slave flip flop circuit and verified with inputs taken in the form of pulses varying from 0 to 0.2v, with a rise and fall time of 25ns. As in the case of combinational circuits, the supply voltage is 0.2v and load capacitance is 10fF. The input pattern chosen for analysis of performance parameters is J=111001101 and K=010110010 and clock=0101010101 at a sample time of 10 microseconds (100kHz) frequency. The output wave forms are plotted for all Flip-flops where v (3),v(4) represents the output corresponding to Master flip-flop and v(8),v(9)represents Slave output.. From the figures 6(a), 6(b) and 6(c), it may be seen that the output logic levels are almost the same as input logic levels and the output is as for expected for the given input .Thus the VT MOS JK master slave flip flop circuit is found to be working properly as that of conventional CMOS JK master slave flip flop circuit.

Circuits (VTMOS JK master slave flip flop for $V_{AN}=V_{AP}=0v$, VTMOS JK master slave flip flop for $V_{AN}=V_{AP}=0.2v$, and CMOS JK master slave flip flop.) for a period of 200 microseconds is shown in Figure 6(a), Figure 6(b) and Figure 6(c).

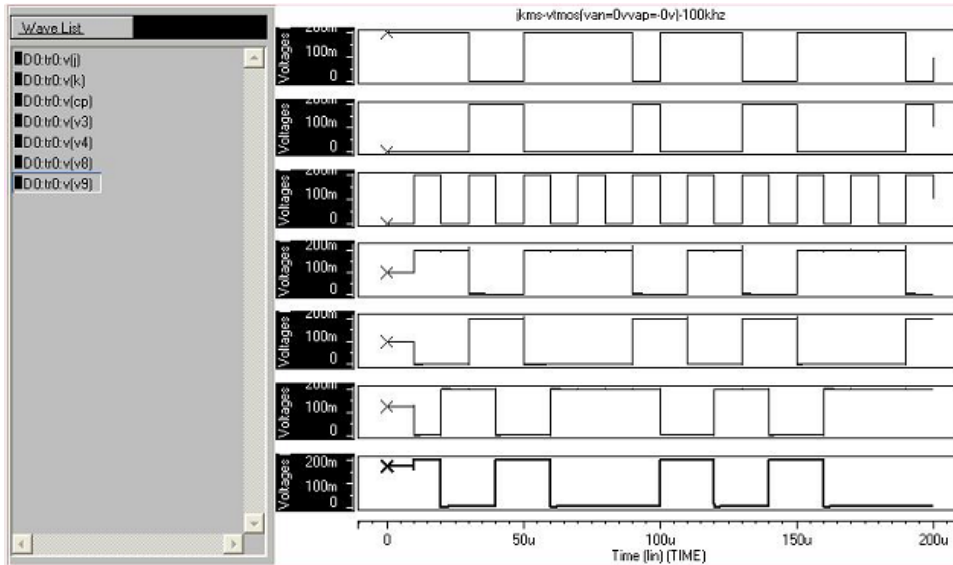


Figure 6(a): INPUT-OUTPUT WAVEFORMS OF VTMOS JKMS Flip flop($V_{AN}=0V, V_{AP}=0V$) -100KHZ

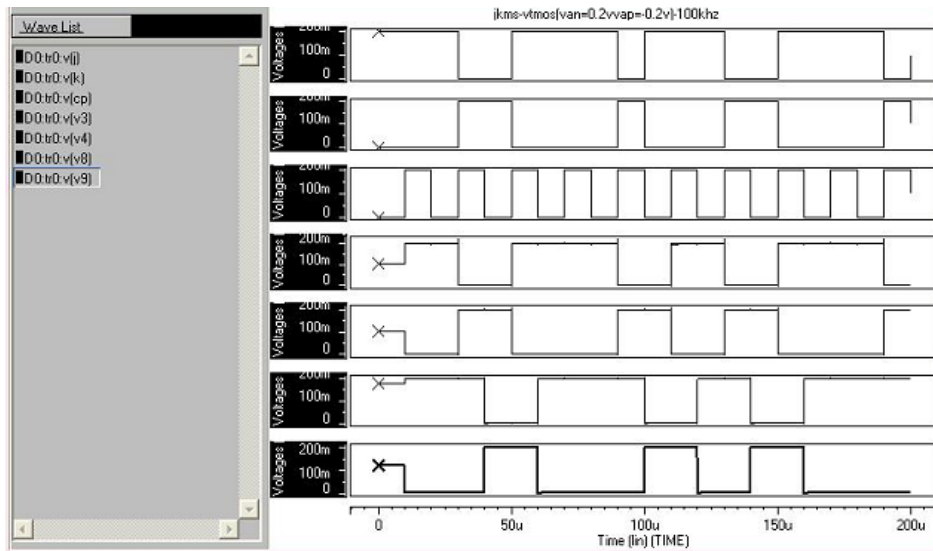


Figure 6(b): INPUT-OUTPUT WAVEFORMS OF VTMOS JKMS Flip flop($V_{AN}=0.2V, V_{AP}=0.2V$) -100KHZ

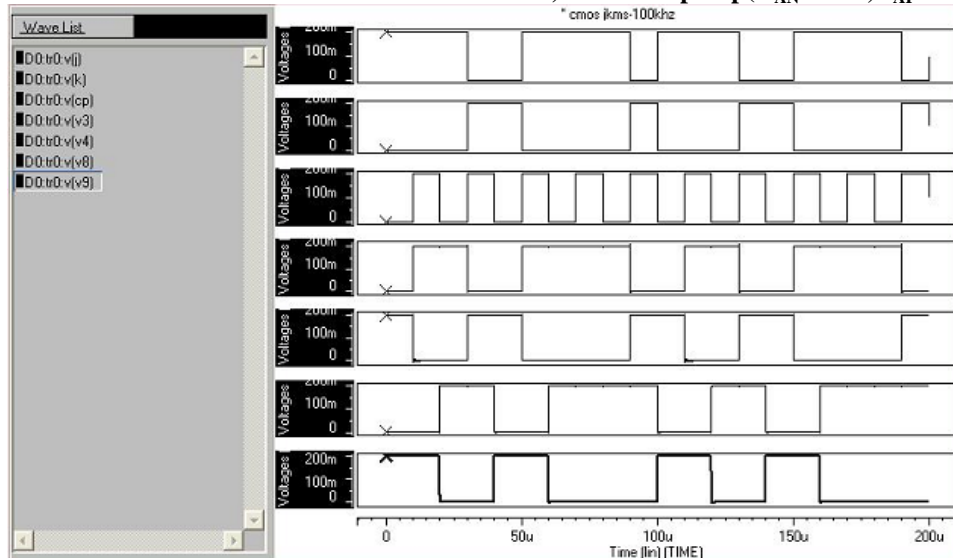


Figure 6(c): INPUT-OUTPUT WAVEFORMS OF CMOS JKMS Flip flop-100KHZ

From the figures 6(a), 6(b) and 6(c), it may be seen that the output logic levels are almost the same as input logic levels and the output is as for expected for the given input. Thus the VT MOS JK master slave flip flop circuit is found to be working properly as that of conventional CMOS clocked SR latch circuit.

The performance of VT MOS JK master slave flip flop circuit with $|V_{AN}|=|V_{AP}|$ varying from 0 to 0.2V is compared with CMOS JK master slave flip flop. The performance analysis is done in following section and result discussion is made in the next section. At last the frequency analysis is done.

III. PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS OF VT MOS JK MASTER SLAVE FLIP FLOP CIRCUIT

The propagation delay, the rise and fall time delay, average power dissipation and power delay product are measured for VT MOS JK master slave flip flop circuit (for $|V_{AN}|=|V_{AP}|$ varying from 0 to 0.2v) at a particular input signal frequency of 100 kHz for performance evaluation. The performance results of VT MOS JK master slave flip flop are also compared with the conventional CMOS JK master slave flip flop in this section.

The variation of performance parameters (propagation delay, average power dissipation and power delay product) for different JK master slave flip flop circuits (Sub threshold VT MOS JK master slave flip flop circuit with $|V_{AN}|=|V_{AP}|$ varying from 0 to 0.2v and CMOS JK master slave flip flop Circuit), are tabulated in Table 2(a) for a frequency of 100 khz, and at supply voltage of 0.2v. The input pattern is repeated for a period of 5000 microseconds. The variation of rise and fall time delays of all JK master slave flip flop circuits is shown in Table 2(b). Along with this, the variation of propagation delay, power dissipation and power delay product for $|V_{AN}|=|V_{AP}|$ varying from 0 to 0.2 v at 100 khz. is also shown in the Figure. 7(a), 7(b), 7(c)

The discussion on the performance analysis is done in the next following section.

S.no	Circuit	T_{PLH} (seconds)	T_{PHL} (seconds)	T_P (seconds)	Average power dissipation (watts)	Power delay product (joules)
1	VTOMS (0V)	4.058E-08	2.280E-08	3.169E-08	4.287E-10	1.358E-18
2	VTMOS(0.05V)	4.607E-08	2.533E-08	3.570E-08	2.566E-10	0.916E-18
3	VTMOS(0.1V)	5.062E-08	2.739E-08	3.901E-08	2.133E-10	0.832E-18
4	VTMOS(0.15V)	5.811E-08	3.238E-08	4.524E-08	1.729E-10	0.782E-18
5	VTMOS(0.2V)	6.724E-08	3.575E-08	5.149E-08	1.464E-10	0.754E-18
6	CMOS	5.177E-08	2.702E-08	3.940E-08	3.121E-10	1.229E-18

Table 2(a) – Variation of propagation delay, power dissipation and power delay product for different JKMS Flip flop circuits

S.no	Circuit	Rise time delay (seconds)	Fall time delay (seconds)
1	VTMOS(0V)	1.167E-08	9.287E-08
2	VTMOS(0.05V)	1.784E-08	2.993E-08
3	VTOMS(0.1V)	2.208E-08	3.105E-08
4	VTMOS(0.15V)	2.418E-08	3.453E-08
5	VTMOS(0.2V)	2.837E-08	5.451E-08
6	CMOS	2.529E-08	4.098E-08

Table 2(b) -Variation of rise and fall time delay for different JKMS Flip flop circuits

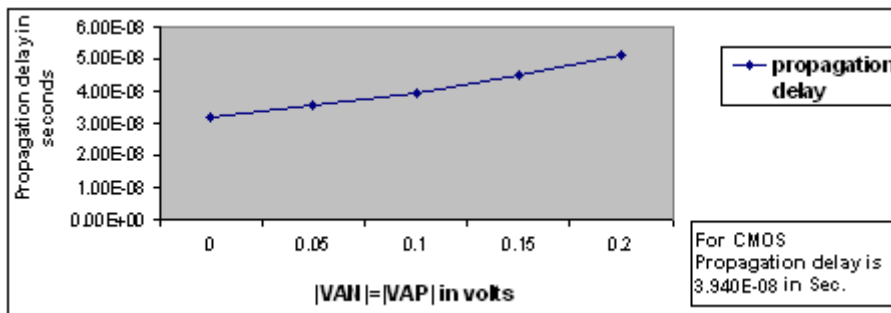


Figure 7(a): Variation of propagation delay for VT MOS JK master slave Flip flop ($|V_{AN}|=|V_{AP}|$ varying from 0 to 0.2v)

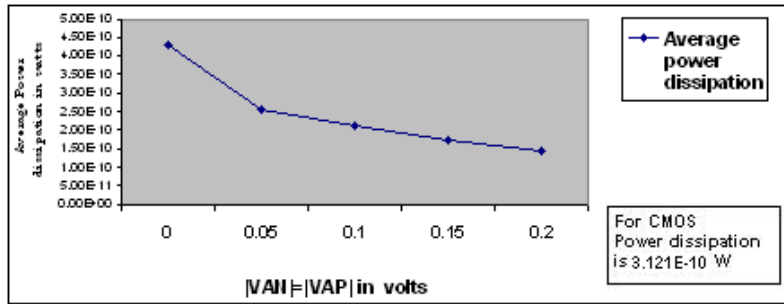


Figure 7(b): Variation of Power dissipation for VT MOS JK master slave Flip flop ($|V_{AN}|=|V_{AP}|$ v varying from 0 to 0.2v)

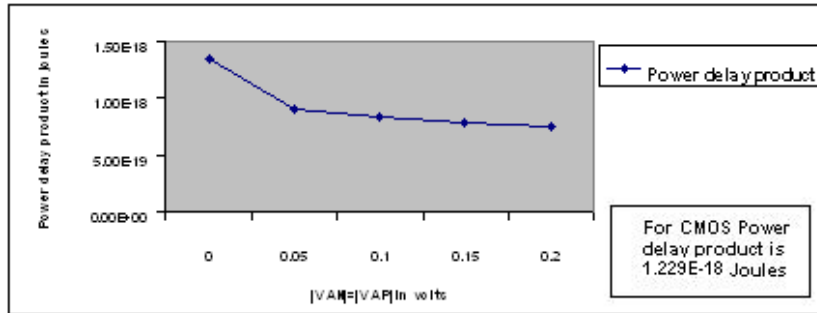


Figure 7(c) : Variation of Power delay product for VT MOS JK master slave Flip flop($|V_{AN}|=|V_{AP}|$ varying from 0 to 0.2v)

3.1 Result Discussion:

Results are obtained from HSPICE simulations using 65nm technology . The variation of propagation delay of VT MOS JKMS Flip flop with $|V_{AN}|=|V_{AP}|$ varying from 0 to 0.2v is plotted in figure 7(a). It is observed that propagation delay of VT MOS JKMS Flip flop, increases with increase in $|V_{AN}|=|V_{AP}|$. The propagation delay is lowest for VT MOS JKMS Flip flop with $|V_{AN}|=|V_{AP}|=0v$ and the propagation delay of VT MOS JKMS Flip flop with $|V_{AN}|=|V_{AP}|=0.2v$, almost approaches the CMOS JKMS Flip flop circuit.

Figure 7(b) gives the variation of power dissipation of VT MOS JKMS Flip flop with $|V_{AN}|=|V_{AP}|$ varying from 0 to 0.2v. It is observed that power dissipation is highest for VT MOS JKMS Flip flop at $|V_{AN}|=|V_{AP}|=0V$. Over all 53% reduction in power dissipation is observed for VT MOS JKMS Flip flop at $|V_{AN}|=|V_{AP}|=0.2v$ when compared to CMOS JK master slave flip flop.

The variation of power delay product of VT MOS JKMS Flip flop with increase in $|V_{AN}|=|V_{AP}|$ is observed in Figure 7(c). The power delay product also reduces with increase in $|V_{AN}|=|V_{AP}|$ which is invited feature of VT MOS JK master flip flop.

3.2 Effect of frequency:

The effect of frequency on performance characteristics is noted by varying the frequency from 100 khz to 8 Mhz. The input and output wave forms of VT MOS JK master slave flip flop at $|V_{AN}|=|V_{AP}|=0v$, VT MOS JK master slave flip flop at $|V_{AN}|=|V_{AP}|=0.2v$ and CMOS JK master slave flip flop are given in Figure 8(a), 8(b) and 8(c) for 2 MHZ(sample time of 500 microseconds) frequency for the same input pattern of J=111001101 and K=010110010 and clock=0101010101.

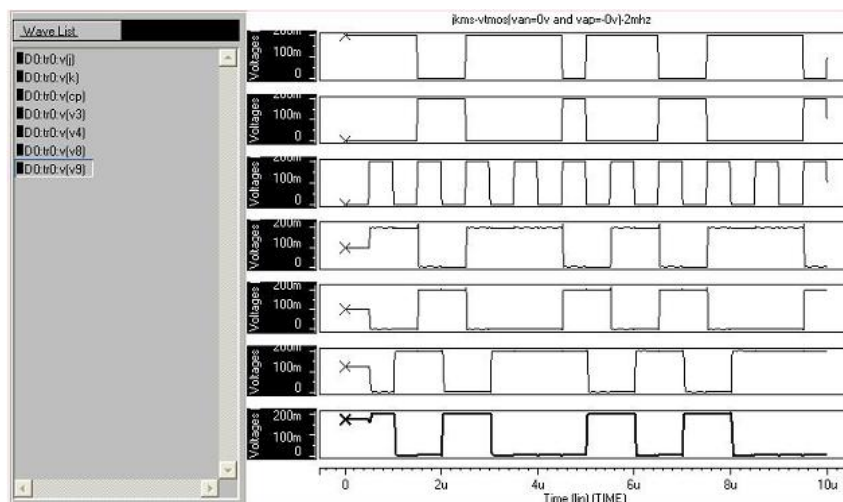


Figure 8(a): INPUT-OUTPUT WAVEFORMS OF VT MOS JKMS Flip flop($V_{AN}=V_{AP}=0V$) -2MHZ

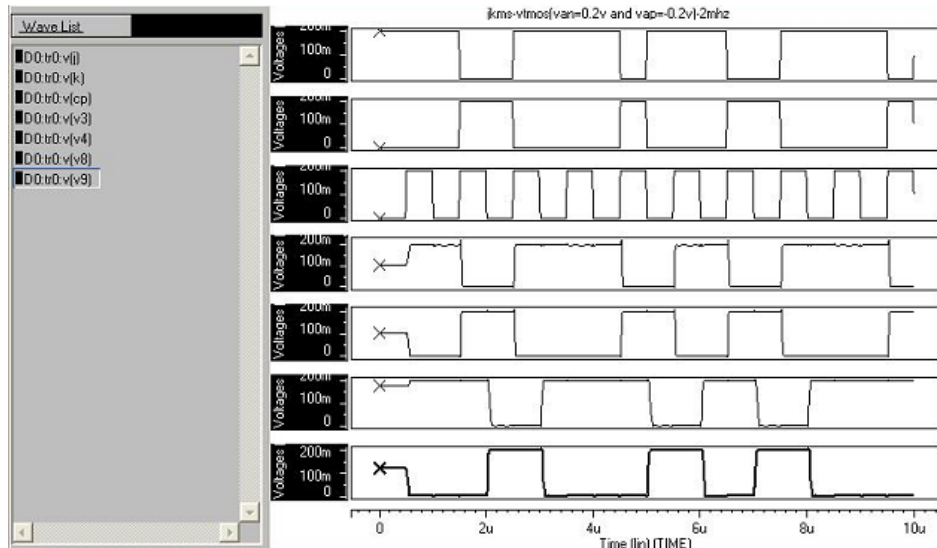


Figure 8(b): INPUT-OUTPUT WAVEFORMS OF VT MOS JKMS Flip flop($V_{AN}=V_{AP}=0.2V$) -2MHZ

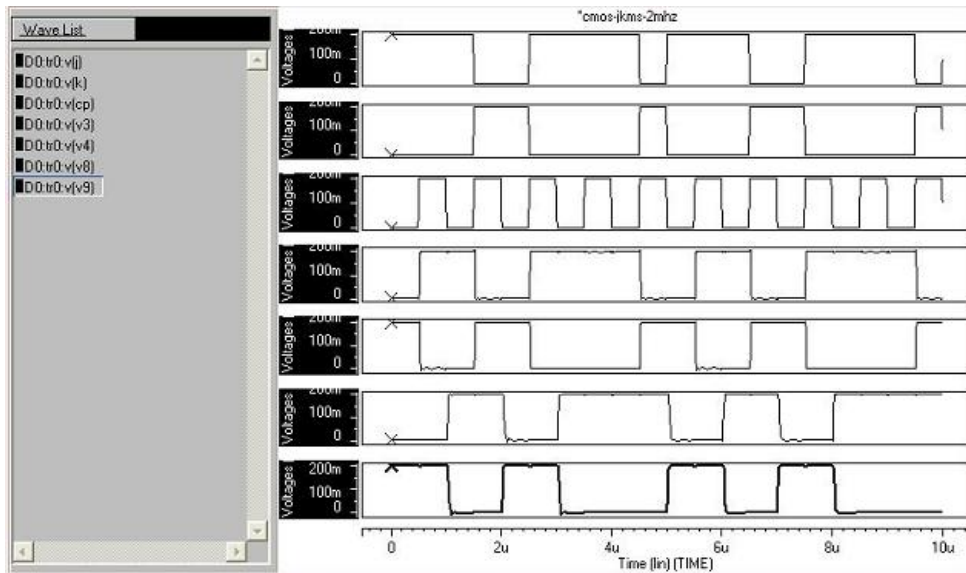


FIGURE 8(c): INPUT-OUTPUT WAVEFORMS OF CMOS JKMS -2MHZ

From the figures it may be seen that the output waveforms resembles the input waveforms at 2Mhz frequency .Hence it can be said that VT MOS JK Master slave circuit is working properly at higher frequencies. With increase in frequency the general trend of variation of power dissipation and propagation delay are maintained as those reported at 100Khz. The variation of power dissipation with frequency for sub threshold VT MOS JK Master slave circuit (0 TO 0.2V) and sub threshold CMOS JK Master slave circuit is shown in Figure 9.It is observed that average power dissipation increases with frequency, but propagation delay and power delay product remains almost constant with frequency. As in the case of VT MOS combinational circuits the power dissipation of VT MOS JK master slave flip flop increases much more faster than in the case of CMOS JK master slave flip flop as frequency is increased. The reasons for this rapid increase in power dissipation in the case of VT MOS JK master slave flip flop are similar to that explained for VT MOS inverter circuits.

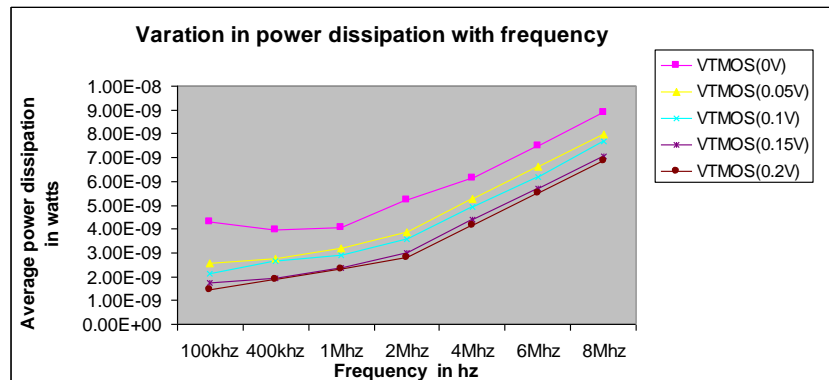


Figure 9: variation of average power dissipation with frequency for JK master slave

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This paper reports a modified DTMOS approach which is called VT MOS approach. In these circuits the substrate is operated with a fixed bias (V_{AN}/V_{AP}) which results in further reduction in the operating currents compared to DTMOS circuits. The Proposed scheme shows improved power efficiency compared to CMOS and DTMOS circuits, up to a frequency of 8 MHz (for the specific devices used in this Investigation).

Using these concepts one may be able to build low power digital circuits like [19, 20] which consume lower power than the conventional CMOS and DTMOS circuits.

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