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Mathematical Analysis of Elliptical Path in the Annular Region Between Two Circles, Smaller Inside the Bigger One (Ellipse Between Two Circles by H.C. Rajpoot)

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Mathematical Analysis of Elliptical Path in the Annulus of Two Circles

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1. Introduction:

When a smaller circle exactly lies inside the bigger one (either touching or not touching internally) with their centres separated by a certain distance, then the **locus of the centre of a third tangent (parametric) circle, in the annular region between them, touching the smaller circle externally & the bigger one internally is always an ellipse having the centres of former circles as its foci & its centre at the midpoint of the centres of former circles**. This path becomes a circle if both the smaller & bigger circles are concentric i.e. centres of both the circles, smaller inside bigger, are coincident. (See figure 1 below, showing an elliptical path (dotted curve A'BAB'A') in the annular region between two circles, smaller inside bigger, with their centres separated by a certain distance)

2. Derivation of major axis, minor axis, eccentricity & equation of elliptical path in the annular region between two circles, one inside other, with their centres separated by a certain distance:

Consider a smaller circle, with a radius r , centred at the origin (point O) completely inside the bigger one, with a radius R , centred at the point O' such that distance between their centres O & O' is d . Now consider an **elliptical path** (dotted curve A'BAB'A' with the centre C) traced by the centre of a third (parametric) circle, in the annular region between them, which touches the smaller circle externally & the bigger one internally.

For convenience, let's assume

major axis, $AA' = 2a$ & minor axis, $BB' = 2b$

Now, we have

$$OE = OF = r, O'D = O'G = R \text{ \& } OO' = d$$

$$DE = O'D - O'E = O'D - (O'O + OE) \\ = R - (d + r)$$

$$\therefore A'E = \frac{DE}{2} = \frac{R - (d + r)}{2} = \frac{R - d - r}{2}$$

$$FG = OG - OF = OO' + O'G - OF = d + R - r$$

$$\therefore FA = \frac{FG}{2} = \frac{R + d - r}{2}$$

$$\Rightarrow A'A = A'E + OE + OF + FA = \frac{R - d - r}{2} + r + r + \frac{R + d - r}{2} = \frac{R - d - r + 4r + R + d - r}{2} = R + r$$

$$\therefore \text{Major axis, } 2a = AA' = R + r \quad \dots \dots \dots (I)$$

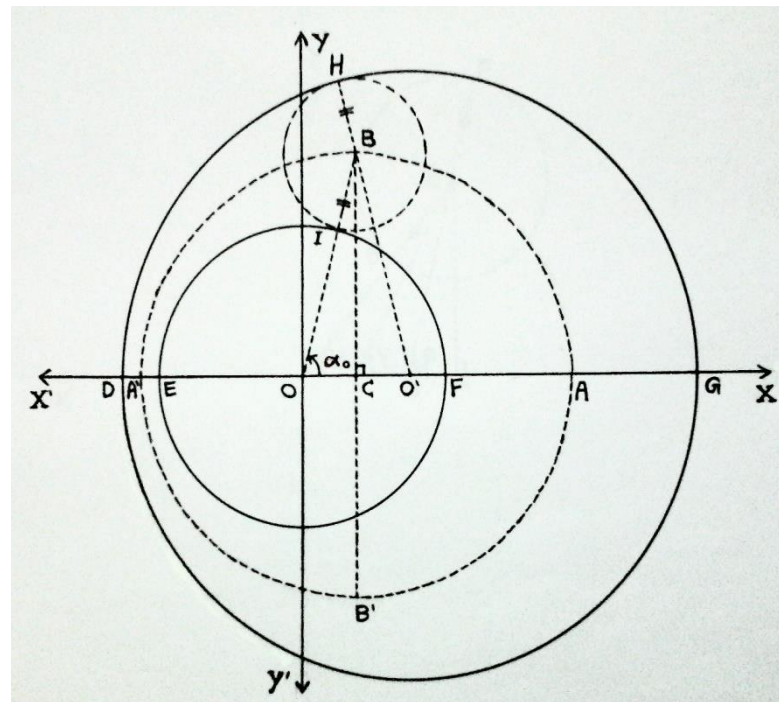


Figure 1: Elliptical path (dotted curve A'BAB'A' with the centre C) is the locus of the centre of a third tangent (parametric) circle, in the annular region between two circles (smaller inside bigger) with their centres separated by a certain distance d , touching the smaller circle (with the centre O) externally & the bigger one (with the centre O') internally.

Mathematical Analysis of Elliptical Path in the Annulus of Two Circles

Now, join the vertex B of the transverse axis BCB' to the origin O so as the line OB intersects the smaller circle at the point I & then join B to the centre O' & extend the line O'B to intersect the bigger circle at the point H. Now, draw a third tangent circle, with a radius a & centre at the vertex B, which touches the smaller circle externally & the bigger one internally. Thus we have

$$BC = \text{semi minor axis} = b, \quad BI = BH = \text{radius of tangent circle} = a \quad \&$$

$$\Rightarrow OC = OG - CG = (OF + FG) - (CA + AG)$$

$$= (OF + FG) - \left(\frac{AA'}{2} + FA \right) \quad \left(CA = CA' = \frac{AA'}{2} \quad \& \quad AG = FA \right)$$

$$OC = (r + R + d - r) - \left(\frac{R+r}{2} + \frac{R+d-r}{2} \right) = \frac{2R + 2d - 2R - d}{2} = \frac{d}{2}$$

$$\therefore CO' = OO' - OC = d - \frac{d}{2} = \frac{d}{2} \quad \Rightarrow \quad \mathbf{CO = CO' = \frac{d}{2}} \quad \dots \dots \dots (II)$$

Thus, the centre C is the midpoint of line segment OO'. Now in the right triangles BCO & BCO' we have

$$CO = CO' = \frac{d}{2}, \quad BO = BO = b \quad \& \quad \angle BCO = \angle BCO' = 90^\circ$$

Hence, the right triangles BCO & BCO' are congruent.

In right $\triangle BCO$

$$OB = \sqrt{(BC)^2 + (OC)^2} = \sqrt{b^2 + \left(\frac{d}{2}\right)^2} = \sqrt{\frac{4b^2 + d^2}{4}} = \frac{\sqrt{4b^2 + d^2}}{2}$$

$$\Rightarrow OB = OI + IB = r + a \quad \therefore \quad \mathbf{r + a = \frac{\sqrt{4b^2 + d^2}}{2}} \quad \dots \dots \dots (III)$$

$$\text{but, } OB = O'B = O'H - BH = R - a \quad (\text{since, right triangles BCO \& BCO' are congruent})$$

Now, equating the value of OB from the eq(III), we get

$$R - a = r + a \Rightarrow 2a = R - r \quad \text{or} \quad a = \frac{R - r}{2}$$

Now, substituting the value of a in the above eq(III), we get

$$r + \frac{R - r}{2} = \frac{\sqrt{4b^2 + d^2}}{2} \quad \text{or} \quad \frac{\sqrt{4b^2 + d^2}}{2} = \frac{R + r}{2}$$

$$\Rightarrow 4b^2 + d^2 = (R + r)^2 \quad \text{or} \quad 2b = \sqrt{(R + r)^2 - d^2}$$

$$\therefore \quad \mathbf{Minor \ axis, \quad 2b = BB' = \sqrt{(R + r)^2 - d^2}} \quad \dots \dots \dots (IV)$$

$$\Rightarrow \text{Eccentricity, } e = \sqrt{1 - \frac{b^2}{a^2}} = \sqrt{1 - \left(\frac{2b}{2a}\right)^2} = \sqrt{1 - \left(\frac{\sqrt{(R + r)^2 - d^2}}{(R + r)}\right)^2}$$

$$= \sqrt{1 - \frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{(R+r)^2}} = \sqrt{1 - 1 + \frac{d^2}{(R+r)^2}} = \sqrt{\frac{d^2}{(R+r)^2}} = \frac{d}{R+r}$$

$$\therefore \text{Eccentricity, } e = \frac{d}{R+r} \quad (0 \leq e < 1 \quad \forall R \geq d+r) \quad \dots \dots \dots (V)$$

Equation of elliptical path: Since, the elliptical path has its centre at the point $C \left(\frac{d}{2}, 0 \right)$, major axis $2a$ & minor axis $2b$, hence the equation of the elliptical path, assuming centre of the smaller circle as the origin, can be obtained by using **standard formula of ellipse centred at the origin** as follows

$$\frac{x^2}{A^2} + \frac{y^2}{B^2} = 1 \Rightarrow \frac{\left(x - \frac{d}{2}\right)^2}{a^2} + \frac{(y-0)^2}{b^2} = 1 \quad \text{or} \quad \frac{\left(x - \frac{d}{2}\right)^2}{a^2} + \frac{y^2}{b^2} = 1$$

$$\therefore \text{Equation of elliptical path, } \frac{\left(x - \frac{d}{2}\right)^2}{a^2} + \frac{y^2}{b^2} = 1 \quad \forall a = \frac{R+r}{2} \quad \& \quad b = \sqrt{(R+r)^2 - d^2}$$

Above equation is very useful for determining the co-ordinates of any point on the elliptical path & the radius of the parametric circle with centre at any arbitrary point on the elliptical path.

Now, the distance of foci from the centre C of elliptical path, can be determined as follows

$$X = \pm ae \Rightarrow x - \frac{d}{2} = \pm \left(\frac{R+r}{2}\right) \left(\frac{d}{R+r}\right) \quad \text{or} \quad x = \frac{d}{2} \pm \frac{d}{2} \Rightarrow x = 0 \quad \& \quad x = d$$

but $x = 0$ & $x = d$ represents the coordinates of the centres O & O' respectively

Hence, it's obvious from the above values that **the centres of two circles are always the foci of the elliptical path in the annulus of these circles, smaller inside bigger, with their centres separated by a certain distance.**

3. Radius of the tangent circle with centre at the vertex B: The radius (a) of tangent circle, having centre at the vertex B of the transverse axis BCB' of the elliptical path, touching the smaller circle externally & the bigger one internally (See the above figure 1), is given as

$$a = \frac{R-r}{2} \quad \forall R \geq d+r$$

And **angle α_o** of the line BO joining the centre B of the tangent circle to the origin O with the x-axis (line OO')

In right $\triangle BCO$

$$\tan \angle BOC = \frac{BC}{OC} \Rightarrow \tan \alpha_o = \frac{b}{\left(\frac{d}{2}\right)} = \frac{2 \left(\frac{\sqrt{(R+r)^2 - d^2}}{2} \right)}{d} = \frac{\sqrt{(R+r)^2 - d^2}}{d} = \sqrt{\left(\frac{R+r}{d}\right)^2 - 1}$$

$$\text{or } \tan \alpha_o = \sqrt{\left(\frac{1}{e}\right)^2 - 1} = \sqrt{\frac{1-e^2}{e^2}} = \frac{\sqrt{1-e^2}}{e} \quad \text{or} \quad \alpha_o = \tan^{-1} \left(\frac{\sqrt{1-e^2}}{e} \right)$$

$$\therefore \alpha_o = \tan^{-1} \left(\sqrt{\left(\frac{R+r}{d}\right)^2 - 1} \right) = \tan^{-1} \left(\frac{\sqrt{1-e^2}}{e} \right) \quad \forall e = \frac{d}{R+r} \quad \& \quad R \geq d+r$$

Above, equation can be used to calculate angle α_o for the tangent circle with centre at the vertex B.

4. Derivation of the radius of tangent (parametric) circle touching the smaller circle externally &

the bigger one internally: Consider a tangent (parametric) circle with the centre at any arbitrary point say E on the elliptical path such that it touches the smaller circle at the point D externally & the bigger one at the point F internally. Now join the centre E of the tangent circle to the origin O, centre C & the centre O' by the dotted lines & also draw a perpendicular EM on the x-axis (see the figure 2) such that

$$\angle EOM = \alpha, \angle ECM = \gamma \text{ \& \& } \angle EO'M = \beta$$

Now, the equation of line OE passing through the origin O & inclined at an angle α with the positive direction of x-axis is given as follows

$$y = mx = x \tan \alpha \quad \forall \quad 0 \leq \alpha \leq \pi$$

Now, solving the equation of the line OE & the equation of elliptical path to calculate the co-ordinates of the point of intersection E of the ellipse & the line by substituting $x = y \cot \alpha$ in the equation of elliptical path as follows

$$\frac{\left(x - \frac{d}{2}\right)^2}{a^2} + \frac{y^2}{b^2} = 1 \Rightarrow \frac{\left(y \cot \alpha - \frac{d}{2}\right)^2}{a^2} + \frac{y^2}{b^2} = 1$$

$$\Rightarrow \frac{\left(y \cot \alpha - \frac{d}{2}\right)^2}{\left(\frac{R+r}{2}\right)^2} + \frac{y^2}{\left(\frac{\sqrt{(R+r)^2 - d^2}}{2}\right)^2} = 1 \quad (\text{on substituting the values of } a \text{ \& } b)$$

$$\text{or } \left(\frac{\sqrt{(R+r)^2 - d^2}}{2}\right)^2 \left(y \cot \alpha - \frac{d}{2}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{R+r}{2}\right)^2 y^2 = \left(\frac{R+r}{2}\right)^2 \left(\frac{\sqrt{(R+r)^2 - d^2}}{2}\right)^2$$

$$\Rightarrow \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{4}\right) \left(y^2 \cot^2 \alpha + \frac{d^2}{4} - y d \cot \alpha\right) + \frac{(R+r)^2}{4} y^2 = \frac{(R+r)^2}{4} \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{4}\right)$$

$$\Rightarrow \left\{ \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{4}\right) \cot^2 \alpha + \frac{(R+r)^2}{4} \right\} y^2 - \left\{ \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{4}\right) d \cot \alpha \right\} y + \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{4}\right) \frac{d^2}{4} - \frac{(R+r)^2}{4} \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{4}\right) = 0$$

$$\left\{ \frac{(R+r)^2 \operatorname{cosec}^2 \alpha}{4} - \frac{d^2}{4} \cot^2 \alpha \right\} y^2 - \left\{ \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{4}\right) d \cot \alpha \right\} y - \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{4}\right) \left(\frac{(R+r)^2}{4} - \frac{d^2}{4}\right) = 0$$

$$\Rightarrow \left\{ \frac{(R+r)^2 \operatorname{cosec}^2 \alpha}{4} - \frac{d^2}{4} \cot^2 \alpha \right\} y^2 - \left\{ \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{4}\right) d \cot \alpha \right\} y - \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{4}\right) \frac{d^2}{4} = 0$$

Now, solving above quadratic for the values of y as follows

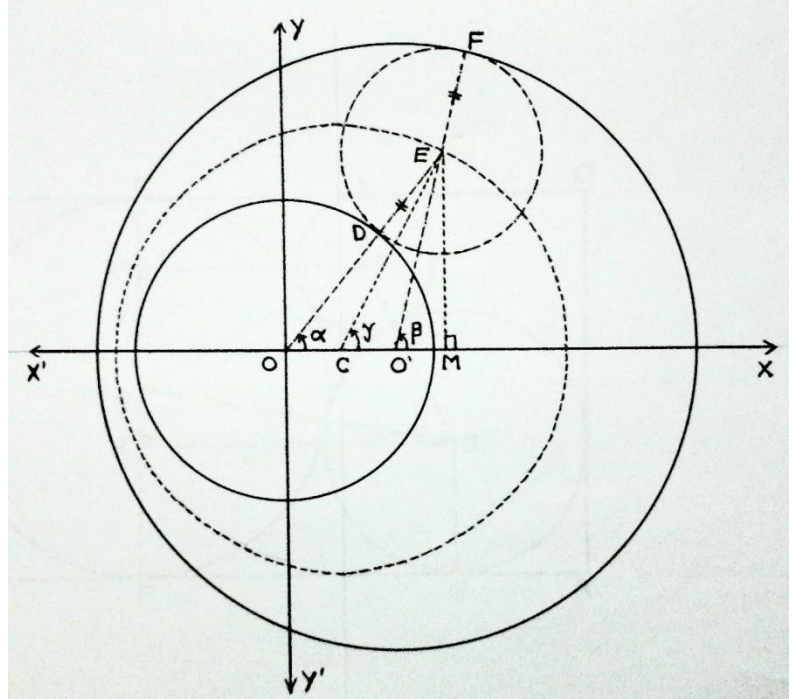


Figure 2: A tangent (parametric) circle, with the centre at any arbitrary point E on the elliptical path, is considered such that the angle of the line OE with the positive direction of x-axis is α in order to calculate its radius

y

$$\begin{aligned}
 &= \frac{\left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{4}\right) dcot\alpha \pm \sqrt{\left\{\left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{4}\right) dcot\alpha\right\}^2 + 4 \left\{\frac{(R+r)^2 cosec^2\alpha}{4} - \frac{d^2}{4} cot^2\alpha\right\} \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{4}\right)^2}}{2 \left\{\frac{(R+r)^2 cosec^2\alpha}{4} - \frac{d^2}{4} cot^2\alpha\right\}} \\
 &= \frac{\left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{4}\right) dcot\alpha \pm \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{4}\right) \sqrt{d^2 cot^2\alpha + (R+r)^2 cosec^2\alpha - d^2 cot^2\alpha}}{\frac{1}{2} \{(R+r)^2 cosec^2\alpha - d^2 cot^2\alpha\}} \\
 &= 2 \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{4}\right) \left(\frac{dcot\alpha \pm (R+r) cosec\alpha}{(R+r)^2 cosec^2\alpha - d^2 cot^2\alpha}\right) = \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{2}\right) \left(\frac{dcos\alpha \pm (R+r)}{(R+r)^2 - d^2 cos^2\alpha}\right) sin\alpha
 \end{aligned}$$

Taking positive sign, we get

$$\begin{aligned}
 y &= \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{2}\right) \left(\frac{dcos\alpha + (R+r)}{(R+r)^2 - d^2 cos^2\alpha}\right) sin\alpha \\
 &= \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{2}\right) \left(\frac{dcos\alpha + (R+r)}{((R+r) + dcos\alpha)((R+r) - dcos\alpha)}\right) sin\alpha = \frac{sin\alpha}{2} \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{(R+r) - dcos\alpha}\right) \\
 \Rightarrow y &= \frac{sin\alpha}{2} \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{(R+r) - dcos\alpha}\right) \geq 0 \quad \forall 0 \leq \alpha \leq \pi \quad \text{hence this value of } y \text{ is accepted}
 \end{aligned}$$

$$\therefore x = ycot\alpha = \frac{sin\alpha cot\alpha}{2} \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{(R+r) - dcos\alpha}\right) = \frac{cos\alpha}{2} \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{(R+r) - dcos\alpha}\right)$$

Taking negative sign, we get

$$\begin{aligned}
 y &= \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{2}\right) \left(\frac{dcos\alpha - (R+r)}{(R+r)^2 - d^2 cos^2\alpha}\right) sin\alpha \\
 &= \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{2}\right) \left(\frac{dcos\alpha - (R+r)}{((R+r) + dcos\alpha)((R+r) - dcos\alpha)}\right) sin\alpha = \frac{-sin\alpha}{2} \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{(R+r) + dcos\alpha}\right) \\
 \Rightarrow y &= \frac{-sin\alpha}{2} \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{(R+r) + dcos\alpha}\right) \leq 0 \quad \forall 0 \leq \alpha \leq \pi \quad \text{hence this value of } y \text{ is discarded}
 \end{aligned}$$

Hence, the co-ordinates of the point of intersection E (i.e. the centre of tangent circle) is given as

$$E \equiv (x, y) \equiv \left(\frac{cos\alpha}{2} \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{(R+r) - dcos\alpha} \right), \frac{sin\alpha}{2} \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{(R+r) - dcos\alpha} \right) \right) \quad \forall 0 \leq \alpha \leq \pi$$

Now, in the right $\triangle EMO$, we have

$$\begin{aligned}
 OM = x &= \frac{cos\alpha}{2} \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{(R+r) - dcos\alpha} \right) \quad \& \quad EM = y = \frac{sin\alpha}{2} \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{(R+r) - dcos\alpha} \right) \\
 \therefore OE &= \sqrt{(OM)^2 + (EM)^2} = \sqrt{\left(\frac{cos\alpha}{2} \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{(R+r) - dcos\alpha} \right) \right)^2 + \left(\frac{sin\alpha}{2} \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{(R+r) - dcos\alpha} \right) \right)^2}
 \end{aligned}$$

$$\Rightarrow OE = \frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{(R+r) - d\cos\alpha} \right) \sqrt{\sin^2\alpha + \cos^2\alpha} = \frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{(R+r) - d\cos\alpha} \right)$$

$$\text{but, } OE = OD + DE = r + ED \Rightarrow ED = OE - r$$

$$\begin{aligned} \therefore ED &= \frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{(R+r) - d\cos\alpha} \right) - r = \frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2 - 2r(R+r) + 2rd\cos\alpha}{(R+r) - d\cos\alpha} \right) \\ &= \frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{R^2 + r^2 + 2rR - d^2 - 2rR - 2r^2 + 2rd\cos\alpha}{(R+r) - d\cos\alpha} \right) = \frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{R^2 - d^2 - r^2 + 2rd\cos\alpha}{(R+r) - d\cos\alpha} \right) \end{aligned}$$

Hence, the **radius (R_α) of the tangent (parametric) circle** for the given value of the angle α is given as follows

$$R_\alpha = \frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{R^2 - d^2 - r^2 + 2rd\cos\alpha}{(R+r) - d\cos\alpha} \right) \quad \forall 0 \leq \alpha \leq \pi \text{ \& } R \geq d + r$$

The above expression is very useful to determine the radius (R_α) of the tangent (parametric) circle for the given value of parametric angle α .

5. Parametric angles β & γ : The parametric angles β & γ are determined for the given value of parametric angle α as follows

In the right $\triangle EMC$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \tan \angle ECM &= \frac{EM}{CM} = \frac{EM}{OM - OC} \Rightarrow \tan \gamma = \frac{\frac{\sin\alpha}{2} \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{(R+r) - d\cos\alpha} \right)}{\frac{\cos\alpha}{2} \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{(R+r) - d\cos\alpha} \right) - \frac{d}{2}} \\ &= \frac{((R+r)^2 - d^2)\sin\alpha}{(R+r)^2\cos\alpha - d^2\cos\alpha - (R+r)d + d^2\cos\alpha} = \frac{((R+r)^2 - d^2)\sin\alpha}{(R+r)^2\cos\alpha - (R+r)d} \\ \therefore \tan \gamma &= \frac{((R+r)^2 - d^2)\sin\alpha}{(R+r)^2\cos\alpha - (R+r)d} \quad 0 \leq \gamma \leq \pi \quad \forall 0 \leq \alpha \leq \pi \end{aligned}$$

In the right $\triangle EMO'$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \tan \angle EO'M &= \frac{EM}{O'M} = \frac{EM}{OM - OO'} \Rightarrow \tan \beta = \frac{\frac{\sin\alpha}{2} \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{(R+r) - d\cos\alpha} \right)}{\frac{\cos\alpha}{2} \left(\frac{(R+r)^2 - d^2}{(R+r) - d\cos\alpha} \right) - d} \\ &= \frac{((R+r)^2 - d^2)\sin\alpha}{(R+r)^2\cos\alpha - d^2\cos\alpha - 2(R+r)d + 2d^2\cos\alpha} = \frac{((R+r)^2 - d^2)\sin\alpha}{(R+r)^2\cos\alpha + d^2\cos\alpha - 2(R+r)d} \\ \therefore \tan \beta &= \frac{((R+r)^2 - d^2)\sin\alpha}{((R+r)^2 + d^2)\cos\alpha - 2(R+r)d} \quad 0 \leq \beta \leq \pi \quad \forall 0 \leq \alpha \leq \pi \end{aligned}$$

Thus, the parametric angles β & γ can be determined for the given value of angle α . Also these angles can be co-related with each other by using above expressions.

Conclusion: For given two circles, smaller inside the bigger one, with their radii r & R respectively and their centres separated by a certain distance d ($\forall d \geq 0$), the **locus of the centre of a third tangent (parametric) circle** (in the annulus of two circles) touching the smaller circle externally & the bigger one internally, is always an **ellipse** (except circle in case of concentric circles) then all the parameters of this elliptical path are determined as follows

Major axis ($2a$):

$$2a = R + r$$

Minor axis ($2b$):

$$2b = \sqrt{(R + r)^2 - d^2}$$

Eccentricity (e):

$$e = \frac{d}{R + r} \quad (0 \leq e < 1 \quad \forall R \geq d + r)$$

Radius (R_α) of the tangent (parametric) circle: For the given value of the parametric angle α

$$R_\alpha = \frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{R^2 - d^2 - r^2 + 2rd\cos\alpha}{(R + r) - d\cos\alpha} \right) \quad \forall 0 \leq \alpha \leq \pi \text{ \& \> } R \geq d + r$$

Parametric angles β & γ :

$$\tan\beta = \frac{((R + r)^2 - d^2)\sin\alpha}{((R + r)^2 + d^2)\cos\alpha - 2(R + r)d} \quad 0 \leq \beta \leq \pi \quad \forall 0 \leq \alpha \leq \pi$$

$$\tan\gamma = \frac{((R + r)^2 - d^2)\sin\alpha}{(R + r)^2\cos\alpha - (R + r)d} \quad 0 \leq \gamma \leq \pi \quad \forall 0 \leq \alpha \leq \pi$$

*All the articles above have been derived by the author by using **simple geometry & trigonometry**. All above articles (formula) are very practical & simple to apply in case studies & practical applications of 2-D Geometry. These articles are the most generalised expressions which can be used for the analysis of the elliptical path in the annular region between two circles, smaller inside the bigger one & their centres separated by a certain distance in order to calculate major axis, minor axis, eccentricity & the radius of the tangent (parametric) circle.*

Note: Above articles had been derived & illustrated by **Mr H.C. Rajpoot (B Tech, Mechanical Engineering)**

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