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(54) METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR VIBRATING HORIZONTAL DRILL STRING TO IMPROVE WEIGHT TRANSFER

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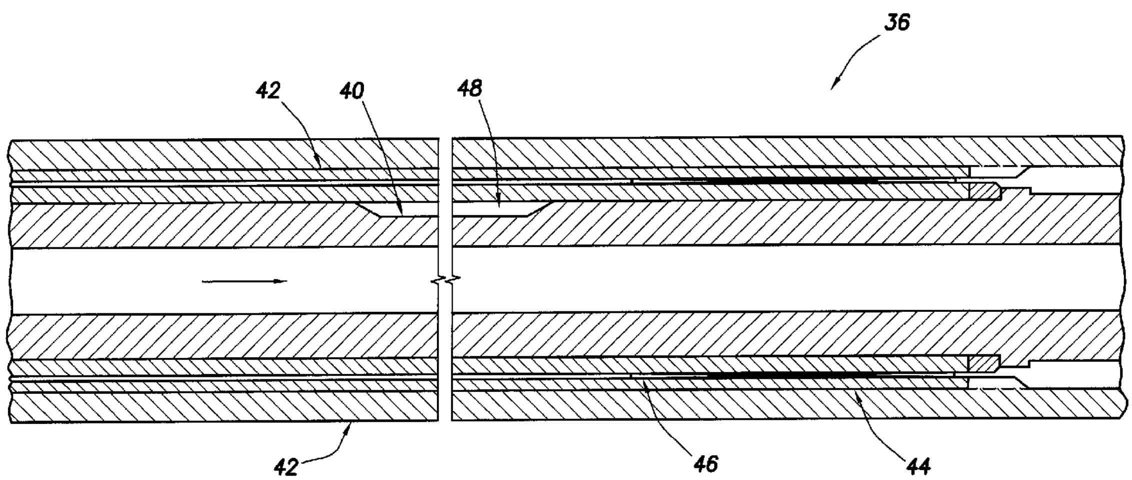
(57) ABSTRACT

An apparatus for use in a horizontal section of a drill string is disclosed. The apparatus includes a motor that is connected to the horizontal section of the drill string. The motor is adapted to impart vibrations in the horizontal section of the drill string, where the vibrations are at about the lateral resonant frequency of the horizontal section of the drill string.



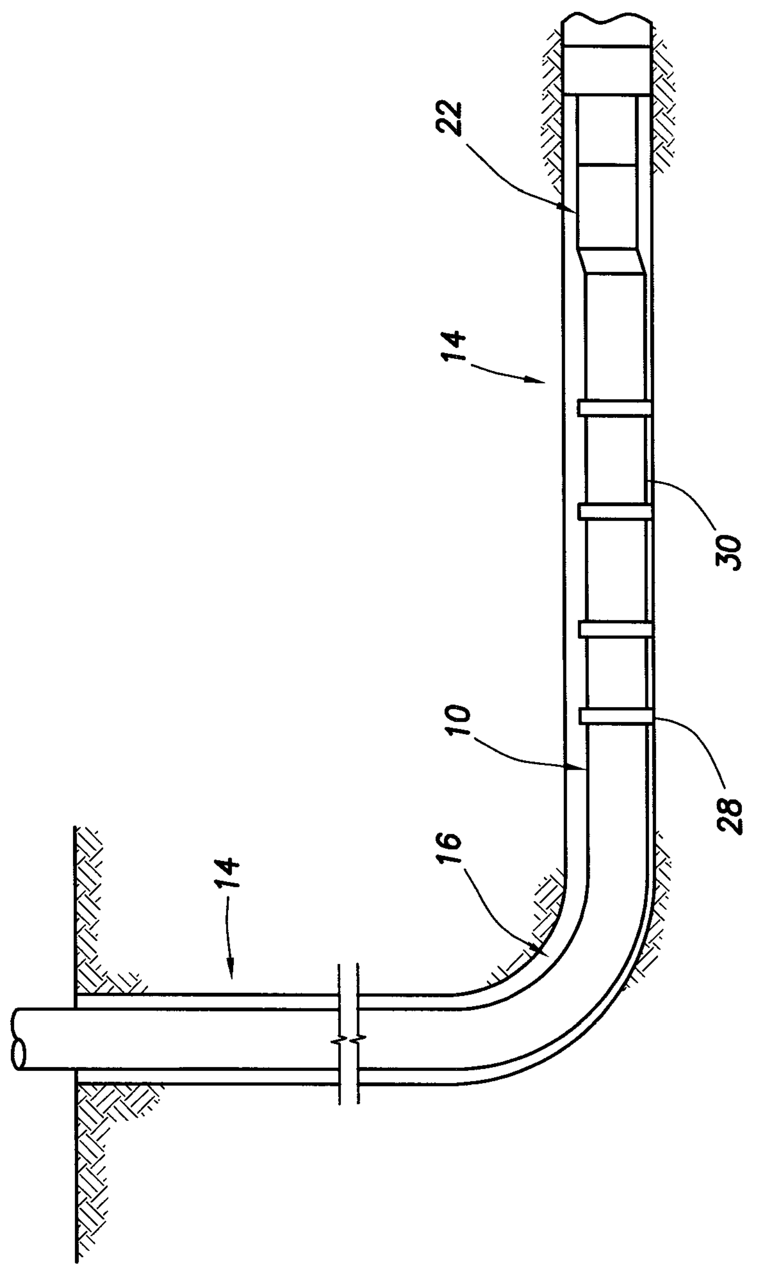


FIG. 1

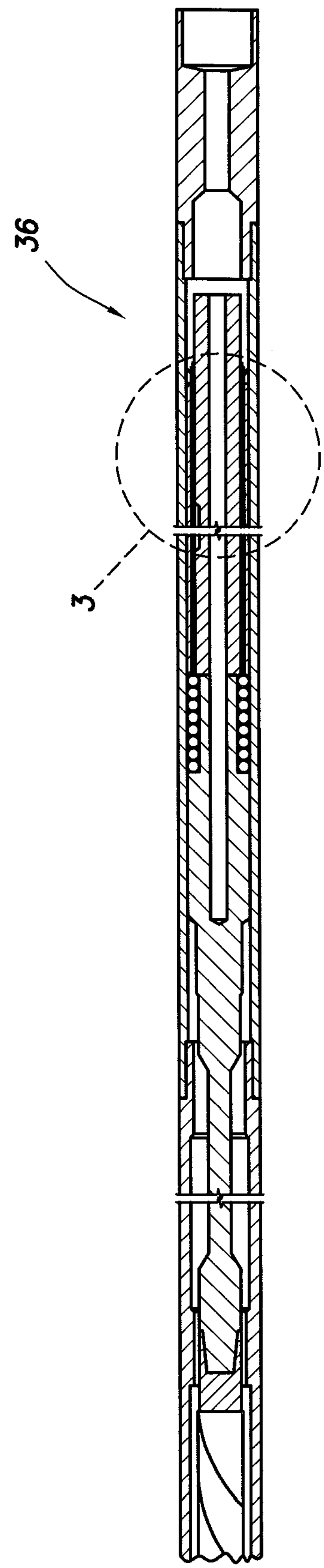


FIG.2

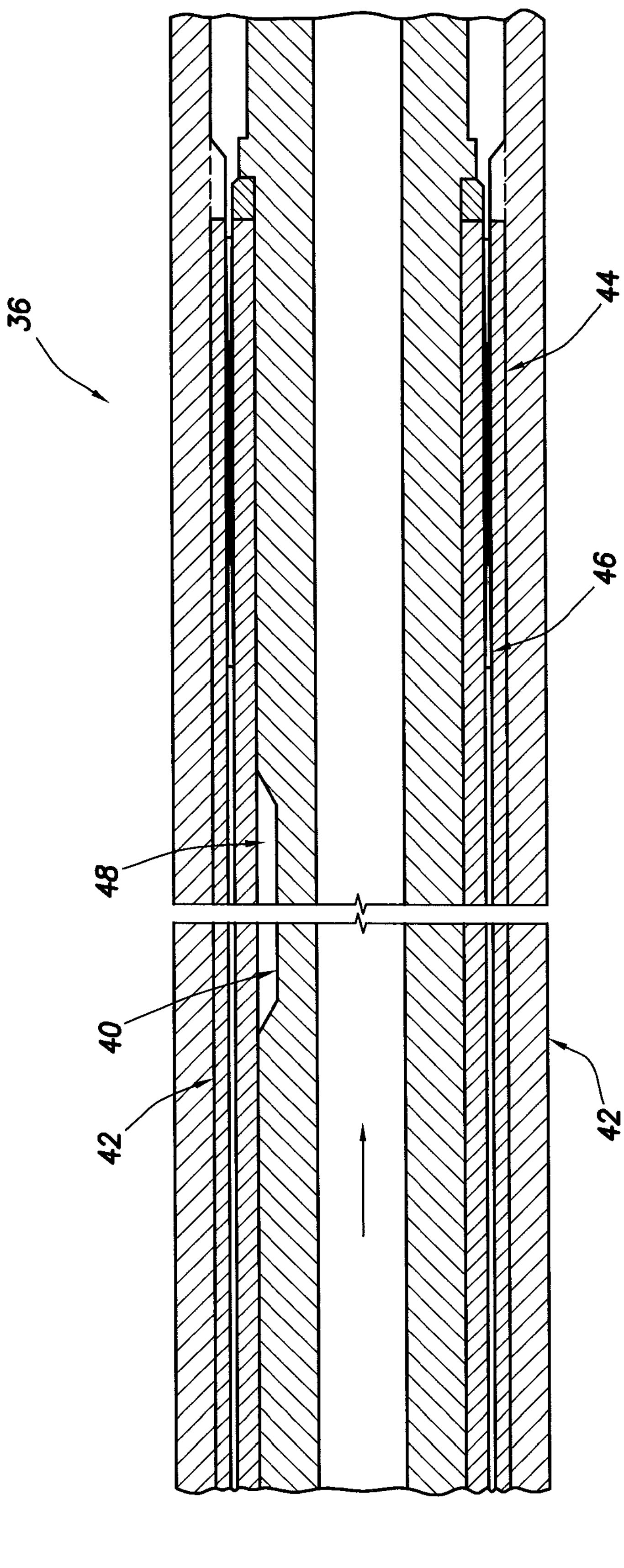


FIG.3

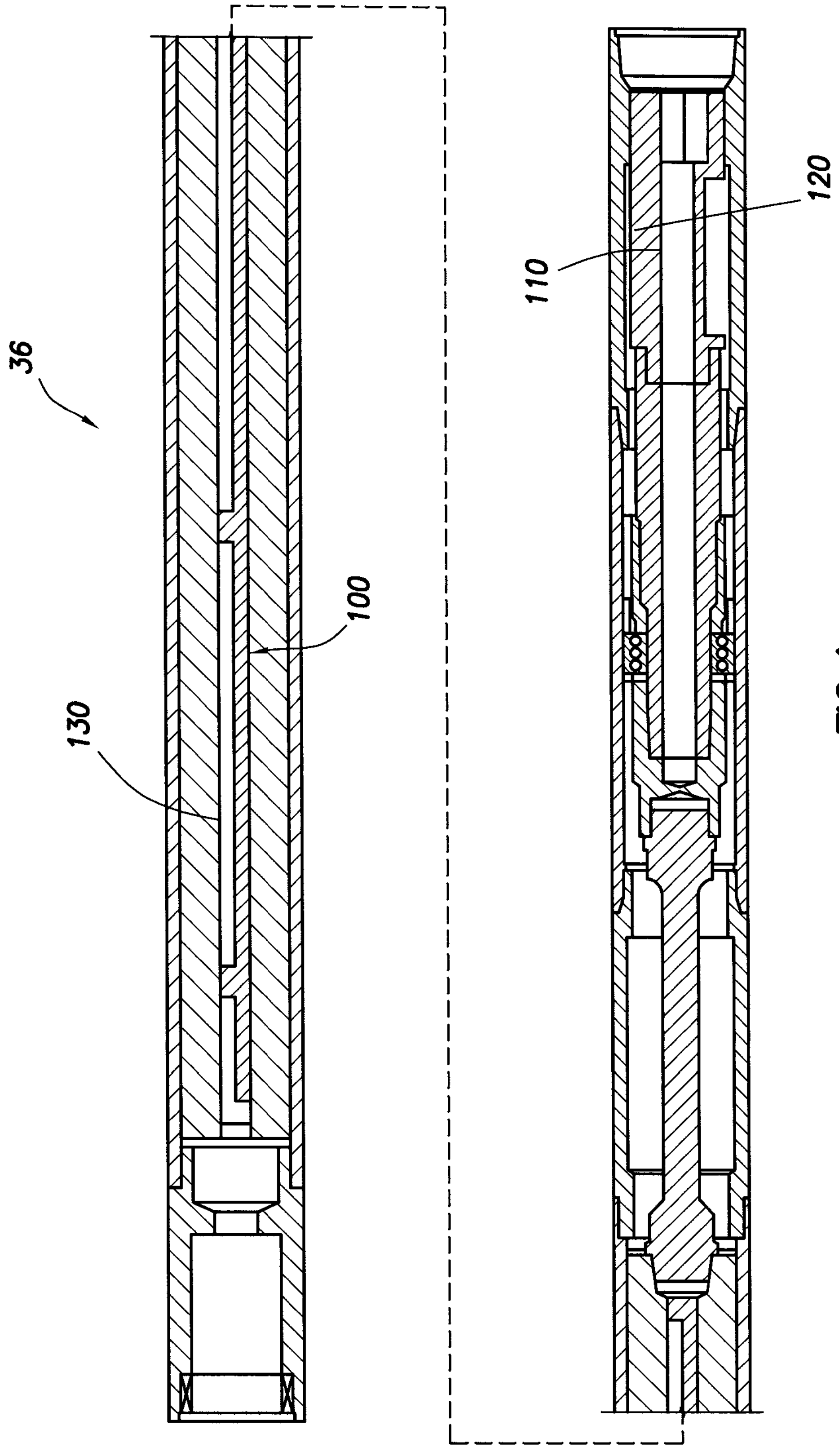


FIG.4

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR VIBRATING HORIZONTAL DRILL STRING TO IMPROVE WEIGHT TRANSFER

BACKGROUND OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0001] This disclosure relates to downhole vibration tools, more particularly, a method and a tool for vibrating a long section of a drill string in a horizontal well bore.

[0002] Modern drilling techniques frequently include highly inclined and horizontal sections of drill string. As a result, the highly inclined and horizontal sections of drill string tend to rest at multiple positions along the bottom of the borehole. Because the drill string is in contact with a side of the bore hole, it is possible for this contact to result in poor weight transfer along the drill string.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0003] The present disclosure is best understood from the following detailed description when read with the accompanying figures. It is emphasized that, in accordance with the stand practice in the industry, various features are not drawn to scale. In fact, the dimensions of the various features may be arbitrarily reduced for clarity of discussion.

[0004] FIG. **1** is an illustration of a drill string in a well bore that is partially vertical and partially horizontal.

[0005] FIG. **2** is a mud motor for laterally vibrating the horizontal section of the drill string in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0006] FIG. **3** is a cross-sectional partial view of mud motor for laterally vibrating the horizontal section of the drill string in accordance with one embodiment of the present disclosure of FIG. **2**.

[0007] FIG. **4** is a mud motor for laterally vibrating the horizontal section of the drill string in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure

DESCRIPTION OF THE EMBODIMENTS

[0008] It is to be understood that the following disclosure provides many different embodiments, or examples, for implementing different features of various embodiments. Specific examples of components and arrangements are described below to simplify the present disclosure. These are, of course, merely examples and are not intended to be limiting. In addition, the present disclosure may repeat reference numerals and/or letters in the various examples. This repetition is for the purpose of simplicity and clarity and does not in itself dictate a relationship between the various embodiments and/or configurations discussed. Moreover, the formation of a first feature over or on a second feature in the description that follows may include embodiments in which the first and second features are formed in direct contact, and may also include embodiments in which additional features may be formed interposing the first and second features, such that the first and second features may not be in direct contact.

[0009] The foregoing outlines features of several embodiments so that a person of ordinary skill in the art may better understand the aspects of the present disclosure. Such features may be replaced by any one of numerous equivalent alternatives, only some of which are disclosed herein. One of ordinary skill in the art should appreciate that they may readily use the present disclosure as a basis for designing or modifying other processes and structures for carrying out the same purposes and/or achieving the same advantages of the embodiments introduced herein. One of ordinary skill in the art should also realize that such equivalent constructions do not depart from the spirit and scope of the present disclosure, and that they may make various changes, substitutions and alterations herein without departing from the spirit and scope of the present disclosure.

[0010] The present disclosure relates to a method and apparatus for laterally vibrating a horizontal section of drill string. In this disclosure "horizontal section of drilling string" is defined as drill string at an angle of 60 degrees or greater with respect to the vertical, i.e., a line from the surface of the earth to the center of the earth. Typically, the horizontal section of drilling string rests at multiple points of the bottom of the borehole. The bottom of the borehole is the side of the borehole closest to the center of the earth. In certain embodiments, the horizontal section of the drill string may be under compression. These horizontal sections of drill string may be hundreds or thousands of feet long. Because of the positioning and compression of the horizontal section of the drill string, poor weight transfer along the horizontal section of drill string may result, creating difficulties in properly drilling the borehole.

[0011] In certain embodiments of the present disclosure, a motor is used to create lateral vibrations in the horizontal sections of drill string. These lateral vibrations may have the effect of creating a serpentine movement of the horizontal section of drill string, resulting in better weight transfer along the horizontal section of drill string.

[0012] The frequency of the lateral vibrations has an effect on the efficiency in causing effective weight transfer. Frequencies that are too high may be dampened by contact with the borehole walls or by the drill string itself. In certain embodiments of the present disclosure, the frequency at which the motor vibrates the drill string is about the lateral resonant frequency of the horizontal section of the drill string. In certain other embodiments of the present disclosure, the frequency at which the motor vibrates the drill string is about the lowest lateral resonant frequency of the horizontal section of the drill string.

[0013] One non-limiting method of determining the lateral resonant frequencies, such as the lowest lateral resonant frequency, of the horizontal section of the drill string is described in IADC/SPE 59235 "Lateral Drilling String Vibrations in Extended Reach Wells", G. Heisig & M. Neubert (2000) (hereinafter Heisig), which is fully incorporated herein by reference. This non-limiting method includes, but is not limited to, FIG. **2**A and found at equation (3) on page of Heisig:

$$f_{min} = \frac{1}{2\pi}\sqrt{\frac{q}{r\mu} - \frac{F^2}{4EI\mu}}.$$

wherein q is the buoyant weight, r is the radial clearance between drilling drillstring and wellbore, F is the axial force on the drill, p, is the vibrating mass per unit length, and EI is the bending stiffness of the drill string.

[0014] As one of ordinary skill in the art will recognize with the benefit of this disclosure, the horizontal section of the drill string is in a dynamic environment for which not all parameters related to resonant frequencies and damping characteristics may be determinable. Thus, the lateral resonant frequency determined by calculation may necessarily be an estimate with a certain degree of error. Further, because of limitations of downhole equipment, such as the motor used to induce the vibrations, it may not be possible to induce the precise lateral resonant frequency desired. Therefore, in certain embodiments "about" the lateral resonant frequency refers to this imprecision.

[0015] In certain embodiments of the present disclosure, the lowest lateral resonant frequency of the horizontal drill string is between 1 and 10 Hz. In certain other embodiments of the present disclosure, the lowest lateral resonant frequency of the horizontal drill string is between 2 and 5 Hz.

[0016] In certain embodiments of the present disclosure, the apparatus for laterally vibrating the horizontal section of the drill string is a motor, such as an electric motor or mud motor. The environment in one aspect of the present disclosure is depicted in FIG. **1**.

[0017] FIG. **1** depicts one or more horizontal drill string sections **28** of drill string **10**, which is lying on the bottom side of a substantially horizontal or highly inclined well bore of extended reach well **14**. Horizontal drill string sections **28** typically include a multiplicity of drill string pipe sections **30** coupled together at joints, and may include wear knots between the joints thereof. Drill string pipe sections **30** are coupled together and at least several of the coupled pipe sections define a horizontal drill string section **28** of drill string assembly **16**. Drill string assembly **16** typically includes a bottom hole assembly (BHA) **22** at the low end or removed end thereof.

[0018] In one embodiment of the present disclosure, the apparatus for vibrating the horizontal section of the drill string is motor **36**, shown in FIG. **2** that is part of BHA **22**. As described above, motor **36** may be an electrical or mud motor, for example. In certain embodiments of the present disclosure, motor **36**, as illustrated in FIGS. **2**, **3**, and **4** induces a lateral frequency to the horizontal as a result of an imbalance.

[0019] FIGS. **2** & **3** depict a mud motor in accordance with certain embodiments of the present disclosure. FIG. **3** depicts the drive train section of motor **36** with bearing housing **42**, lower outer radial bearing **44**, lower inner radial bearing **46**, and lower outer spacer **50**. FIG. **3** further includes mandrel **40** with imbalance **48**.

[0020] A drilling fluid, generally referred to as drill mud, is circulated to drive the mud motor by positive hydraulic displacement or turbine action. Bearing assemblies are provided for the power transmission or drive train engaged to the rotor and stator of a power section for converting eccentric motion to concentric motion. As seen in FIGS. **2** and **3**, motor **36** may include a drive train that may include a hollow drive shaft, also known as a mandrel **40**, that is located within bearing housing **42**. Mandrel **40** is rotatably driven by the power section of motor **36**, while bearing housing **42** is fixed to the drill string and remains relatively stationary. Here, the drive train includes the bearing housing **42** having a lower outer spacer **50** concentrically within bearing housing **42**. Bearing housing **42**, at a lower end thereof, engages lower outer radial bearing **44** with lower inner radial bearing **46** on the inner surface thereof. Mandrel **40** has one or more partial cutouts **48** providing an imbalance when the mandrel rotates. Mandrel **40** is driven concentrically by engagement with the rotor but, with the cutout **48** therein, an imbalance is provided which may generate lateral flexing in the long section of the drill string, as set forth hereinabove. It is noted with reference to FIG. **3** that cutout **48** creates an eccentricity in the mandrel as it has no opposed cutout. While cutout **48** is shown in the external walls of the mandrel, one or more cutouts may be provided to the inner walls or any other suitable place appropriately arranged. In another embodiment, added mass (not shown) eccentrically added on the inner walls of the mandrel may also be provided to generate imbalance.

[0021] By controlling mud flow through motor **36** of FIGS. **2** & **3**, the frequency of lateral vibration can be controlled.

[0022] In one embodiment of the present disclosure consistent with FIGS. **2** and **3**, the flow of drilling mud through motor **36** may be controlled from the surface. In this embodiment, the operator determines the mud flow necessary to impart the desired lateral frequency, such as the lowest lateral resonant frequency, based on the imbalance on the mandrel.

[0023] In another embodiment of the present disclosure consistent with FIGS. **2** and **3**, a bypass nozzle upstream of the power section (not shown) and having a multiplicity of bypass nozzle settings may be provided for engagement with the motor **36**, such as that illustrated in FIGS. **2**-**3**. The bypass nozzle may bypass mud through the center of the rotor. A control algorithm may be provided to determine the nozzle valve setting to generate frequencies in the selected range. In addition, control means may be included to dynamically adjust the valve nozzle to the determined setting, which setting maximizes the amplitude so as to substantially maintain the excitation means at a frequency in the desired range.

[0024] In still other embodiments, a rod may be longitudinally inserted into the rotor. The rod may be eccentric, i.e., not round. For instance, in one non-limiting embodiment, the cross-section of the rod is of a half-moon shape. In certain of this embodiment, mandrel **40** may not have cutout sections or weight added to it.

[0025] In other embodiments, in addition to or, in lieu of BHA **22** location of motor **36**, motor **36** may be located at other points along horizontal drill string sections **28**. Multiple motors **26** may be used in longer horizontal drill string sections **28**.

[0026] In certain embodiments of the present disclosure a measurement device, for example, an accelerometer or a bending strain gauge, may be provided for monitoring of the amplitude of the laterally vibrating horizontal section **28**. This measurement device may be mechanically attached to horizontal section **28** or to motor **36**, for example. Further, the measurement device may be electrically connected to a control system, wherein the control system is adapted to adjust the motor to impart the lateral resonant frequency based on the frequency of the lateral vibrations of the horizontal section determined by the measurement device.

[0027] FIG. **4** depicts another embodiment of the present disclosure. In the embodiment depicted in FIG. **4**, motor **36** includes shaft **130**. Eccentric mass rotor insert **100** is attached to drive shaft **130**. Lower eccentric mass **120** is also attached to drive shaft **130**. The approximate location of mass centroid **110** is further depicted in FIG. **4**. Eccentric mass rotor insert **100** and lower eccentric mass **120** are set 180 degrees apart, that is on opposite sides of drive shaft **130**. While not bound by theory, the placement of the eccentric masses on opposite sides of the drive shafts results in a vibration node between the two masses.

[0028] The Abstract at the end of this disclosure is provided to comply with 37 C.F.R. §1.72(b) to allow the reader to quickly ascertain the nature of the technical disclosure. It is submitted with the understanding that it will not be used to interpret or limit the scope or meaning of the claims.

[0029] Moreover, it is the express intention of the applicant not to invoke 35 U.S.C. §112, paragraph 6 for any limitations of any of the claims herein, except for those in which the claim expressly uses the word "means" together with an associated function.

1. An apparatus for use in a horizontal section of a drill string comprising:

a motor, wherein the motor is connected to the horizontal section of the drill string; and

a mandrel, the mandrel being a hollow shaft, the mandrel having a longitudinal axis, the mandrel having an external wall and an inner wall, the external wall or inner wall including a partial cutout, the partial cutout providing an imbalance in the mandrel, such that the motor rotates the mandrel to impart lateral vibrations in the horizontal section of the drill string and wherein the vibrations are at about a lateral resonant frequency of the horizontal section of the drill string.

2. The apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the vibrations are imparted generally at the lowest lateral resonant frequency

3. The apparatus of claim **2**, wherein the vibrations are in the frequency range of 1 to 10 Hz.

4. The apparatus of claim **3**, wherein the vibrations are in the frequency range of 2 to 5 Hz.

5. The apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the motor is a mud motor or an electrical motor.

6. A mud motor for use in a horizontal section of a drill string comprising:

a rotor;

a stator engaged with the rotor adapted to cause a drive train coupled to the rotor to rotate at a rotary speed;

a mandrel mechanically connected to the drive train, the mandrel being a hollow shaft, the mandrel having a longitudinal axis, the mandrel having an external wall and an inner wall, the external wall or inner wall including a partial cutout, the partial cutout providing an imbalance in the mandrel such that when rotated by the rotor, the mandrel generates lateral vibrations in the horizontal section of the drill string in a selected frequency range of 1 to 10 Hz.

7. (canceled)

8. The mud motor of claim **6** , wherein the drive train includes a drive shaft and further comprising two eccentric masses attached to the drive train.

9. (canceled)

10. A mud motor for use in a horizontal section of a drill string comprising:

a rotor, the rotor being hollow;

a stator engaged with a drive train to rotate at a rotary speed, wherein drive train comprises a hollow rotor;

a rod, wherein the rod is longitudinally inserted into the hollow rotor, and wherein the cross-section of the rod is non-circular.

11. The mud motor of claim **10**, wherein the cross-section of the rod has a half-moon shape.

12. A process for generating lateral vibrations in a horizontal section of a drill string comprising;

supplying a motor, wherein the motor is mechanically connected to the horizontal section of the drill string;

operating the motor to rotate a mandrel having an imbalance, the mandrel being a hollow shaft, the mandrel having a longitudinal axis, the mandrel having an external wall and an inner wall, the external wall or inner wall including a partial cutout, the partial cutout providing an imbalance in the mandrel so as to cause the horizontal section of the drill string to vibrate laterally in reference to the longitudinal axis of the drill string as the mandrel is rotated, wherein the vibrations are at about a -lateral resonant frequency of the horizontal section of the drill string.

13. The process of claim **12**, wherein the lateral resonant frequency is the lowest lateral resonant frequency.

14. The process of claim **13**, wherein the lowest lateral resonant frequency is calculated using the formula:

$$f_{min} = \frac{1}{2\pi}\sqrt{\frac{q}{r\mu} - \frac{F^2}{4EI\mu}}.$$

wherein q is the buoyant weight, r is the radial clearance between drilling drillstring and wellbore, F is the axial force on the drill, μ is the vibrating mass per unit length, and EI is the bending stiffness of the drill string.

15. The process of claim **13**, wherein the vibrations are in the frequency range of 1 to 10 Hz.

16. The process of claim **15**, wherein the vibrations are in the frequency range of 2 to 5 Hz.

17. The process of claim **12**, wherein the motor is an electric motor or a mud motor.

18. The process of claim **12**, further comprising:

monitoring the frequency of the lateral vibrations of the horizontal section.

19. The process of claim **18**, further comprising:

supplying a control system, wherein the control system is adapted to adjust the motor to impart the lateral resonant frequency based on the frequency of the lateral vibrations of the horizontal section determined by the monitoring step.

20. The apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the mandrel comprises two or more partial cutouts.

21. The apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the partial cutout is formed in the external wall of the mandrel.

22. The apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the partial cutout is formed in the inner wall of the mandrel.

* * * * *