Surface Runoff Estimation using RS and GIS - A Case Study of Swarnamukhi River, India

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Abstract: For proper utilization and management of water, as in planning and design of water storage structures, channel improvement, estimation of surface runoff is essential. Geographic Information System (GIS) is specifically designed to merge maps with database and is well suited to work with all stages of hydrological modeling. Present study aims to quantify the hydrological response of the watershed, Konakalavu, a sub watershed of Savarnamukhi River flowing across Rangampet, Srikalahasthi and drains into Bay of Bengal for different rainfall conditions. Remote sensing and GIS are used to overcome the inconveniences faced while using conventional methods for estimating runoff. In this project, Natural Resources Conservation System - Curve Number model is used for rainfall-runoff estimation using slope, vegetation cover and drainage density of the basin. Runoff depths are computed for average rainfall values. For an average infiltration condition, estimated surface runoff is 24.6 mm with correlation coefficient between the observed and predicted (modelled) runoffs being 0.78. This indicates the method is reliable in predicting the surface runoff of the catchment.

Keywords: Antecedent Moisture Condition, Hydrological Soil Group, Curve Number, Runoff, Remote Sensing

1. Introduction

Rainstorms generate runoff, and its occurrence and quantity are dependent on the characteristics of the rainfall event, i.e. the intensity, duration and distribution. Apart from these rainfall characteristics, there are number of catchment specific factors, which have a direct effect on the occurrence and volume of runoff. This includes soil type, vegetation cover, slope and catchment type. Curve Number (CN) provides an empirical relationship for estimating initial abstraction and runoff as a function of soil type and land use. Rainfall runoff relationship can be visualized by the factors such as initial abstraction (Ia), direct runoff (Q), and actual retention (F). CN is an index developed by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), to represent the potential for storm water runoff within a drainage area. The CN for a drainage basin is estimated using a combination of land use, soil, and Antecedent Moisture Condition (AMC) (J P Patil et al. 2008) [8]. There are four hydrologic soil groups: A, B, C and D. Group A have high infiltration rates and group D have low infiltration rates. The present work is taken up in this context, to predict the runoff occurring at a place owing to the precipitation occurring at that location. The accurate assessment of runoff will lead to effective use of water either by way of agriculture, domestic use, industrial use, power generation, etc. and thus the resources can be managed effectively.

Ragan, R. M. and dan Jackson, T. J. (1980) [9] studied over the land cover requirements of the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) model used to develop volume of runoff for hydrograph synthesis in suburban areas were modified to be compatible with Landsat digital data. Curve numbers obtained with these alternate land cover categories compared well with those obtained in published example problems using conventional categories. Synthetic Flood Frequency relationships computed for a test watershed showed that the conventional approach based on aerial photos agreed well with the Landsat-based approach to land cover determination, Asit Kumar Dandapat and Sanat Nalini Sahoo (2019) [1], developed Interface in ArcGIS for surface runoff estimation using curve number techniques was used to estimate the surface runoff by adopting one of the most widely used NRCS-CN techniques and its three derivatives. The results corroborated the finding that the NRCS-CN based surface runoff predictions are very sensitive to the Antecedent Moisture Condition (AMC) of watershed systems.

1.1 Study Area and Objective

The sub continent of India lies in South Asia, of which Andhra Pradesh is a state. Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh is constituted on 1st April, 1911 and the global situation is between 12° 37’ to 14° 8’ of Northern latitude and 78° 33’ to 79° 55’ of Eastern longitude (Fig 1). The district is divided in to three revenue divisions i.e. Chittoor, Madanapalle and Tirupati with 66 Mandalas covering 1540 Revenue Villages.

The objective is to develop a procedure by which interpreting remotely sensed imagery in hydrologic process can be represented and approximately estimated in a gauged basin. The hypothesis refers to the convenience of the adopted method to estimate the runoff and peak discharge of an area using remote sensing interpretation and GIS and empirical formulae, trying to prove the method applicability for runoff estimations based on indirect measurements. The
present study aims to get an approximation to the hydrological response of the landscape unit of the Konakaluva watershed covering an area of 75.37 sq.km.

Figure 1: Location of the Study Area

2. Material and Method

Many methods for estimating runoff exist. Runoff volume or rate estimation involves estimating the amount of rainfall exceeding infiltration and initial abstractions, which must be satisfied before the occurrence of runoff. Infiltration excess runoff can be estimated using different techniques. Some of the methods like Rational Method, Synthetic unit Hydrograph Method, and coming to the adopted method in the present study is NRCS method. The technique is considered as a reliable one. It has been used for many years as it was adopted as an alternative to the rational and other methods. It can also be considered as computationally efficient. The required inputs are generally available, and it relates runoff to soil type, land use and management practices. The steps involved in the estimation of runoff can be broadly grouped as follows, deciding the AMC, interpretation of satellite imagery, preparation of hydrological soil group map, calculation of potential maximum retention (S) and calculation of Runoff (Qmod) for the sub- watersheds.

The NRCS (SCS) method (1986) [7] accounts for this possibility by allowing the curve number to depend on AMC in 5 days moisture or wetness condition of the soil before occurrence of a storm. This is determined by the total rainfall in the 5 days period preceding a storm.

NRCS has identified three types of multi-level humidity conditions (anteecedent moisture condition) as a factor affecting CN on land, namely: dry (condition 1, wilting point has not been reached), the mean (condition 2), and saturated water (condition 3). Curve numbers corresponding to AMC-I and AMC-III conditions can be computed from AMC – II. The computed CN is rounded to the nearest whole number and the table values represent at AMC II condition used in this study. To determine the value of CN at AMC I and III, using table obtained by the empirical formulae, CN I and CN III are:

\[
CN(I) = \frac{4.2CN(II)}{10 + 0.09SCN(II)}
\] (1)

\[
CN(III) = \frac{2CN(II)}{10 + 0.15SCN(II)}
\] (2)

2.2 Hydrologic Condition

The different Hydrological Soil Group in the study area are categorized as shown in Table 2. The hydromorphic condition of range land, meadow, or pasture is defined to be ‘good’ if it is highly grazed and has vegetative cover or more than 75% of the area. Conversely, a ‘poor’ hydrologic condition corresponds to a heavily grazed area with vegetation covering less than 50% of the surface.

Table 2: Area of Hydrological Soil Group

| No. | HSG | Area (km²) |
|-----|-----|------------|
| 1   | A   | 21.45      |
| 2   | B   | 15.77      |
| 3   | C   | 16.02      |
| 4   | D   | 22.13      |
| Total |     | 75.37      |

2.3 Preparation of Soil Cover Complex

Soil cover complex map is prepared by integrating or overlaying hydrological soil group map and land use map. Polygons formed out this are assigned a curve number considering the average antecedent moisture condition (AMC II). The sub watershed which are having more than one curve number values are identified and assigned a single curve number for each sub watershed by calculating the weighted average of the curve numbers.

2.4 Assigning Actual Curve Number Values

From the weighted curve number (AMC II) the curve number of the sub- watershed is reassigned to a modified curve number and using the actual antecedent moisture condition (AMC I – III) of the watershed on daily rainfall basis. In determining the value of CN should also pay attention to soil moisture conditions prior or antecedent moisture conditions. Water-saturated soils, contributing to generate large surface water and ground with dry conditions contributed little to generate runoff.
The Surface Retention Grid and Runoff Grid are derived from GIS environment as shown in Fig.2 and Fig.3, derived calculations of runoff are shown in the Table 4.

CN = (% Impervious)*(98) + {1 - (% Impervious)*(CN – for different hydrologic condition & and Cover)}

2.5 SCS Curve Number Model

NRCS rainfall runoff model (1986) [7], developed by United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides an empirical relationship estimating initial abstraction and runoff as function of soil type and land use. The water balance equation is expressed by

\[ Q = P - (I_a + F) \]  

Where Q is direct runoff, P is rainfall, Ia is the sum of all losses before the beginning of runoff and F is retention after runoff begins. Estimation of rainfall runoff using NRCS – CN model is defined by the equation given below

\[ Q = \left(\frac{(P-I_a)^2}{P-I_a+S}\right) \]  

For Indian soil condition, the above relation is modified as,

\[ I_a = 0.2S \]  

Substituting for Ia in the generalized runoff equation produces

\[ Q = \left(\frac{(P-0.2S)^2}{P-0.2S+S}\right) \]  

Where Q is the runoff given precipitation depth P, S is the maximum storage depth, and CN is the runoff curve number. The Surface Retention Grid and Runoff Grid are derived from GIS environment as shown in Fig.2 and Fig.3, derived calculations of runoff are shown in the Table 4.

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\[ CN = \left(\frac{\%\text{ Impervious}}{100}\right) \times 98 + \left(1 - \frac{\%\text{ Impervious}}{100}\right) \times \left(\frac{\text{CN – for different hydrologic condition & Cover}}{100}\right) \]  

### Table 3: CN Values for different Land Cover and HSG

| No. | Land cover          | Hydrologic soil group A | B | C | D |
|-----|---------------------|-------------------------|---|---|---|
| 1   | Forest              | 25                      | 55 | 70 | 77 |
| 2   | Open scrub          | 72                      | 82 | 88 | 90 |
| 3   | Residential area    | 60                      | 74 | 83 | 87 |
| 4   | Waste land          | 36                      | 60 | 73 | 78 |
| 5   | Agriculture         | 64                      | 75 | 83 | 87 |
| 6   | Water bodies        | 98                      | 98 | 98 | 98 |

### Table 4: Calculation of Runoff and observed values for the catchment

| Date     | Rainfall (mm) | AMC (mm) | AMC Class | CN | Ia  | S    | Qmod | Qobs |
|----------|---------------|----------|-----------|----|-----|------|------|------|
| 1 June, 2007 | 4             | 2.29     | I         | 74 | 17.84 | 89.24 | 2.5  | 2.0  |
| 6 June, 2007  | 2             | 24.43    | I         | 74 | 17.84 | 89.24 | 3.4  | 2.6  |
| 19 June, 2007 | 21.5          | 102.14   | III       | 74 | 17.84 | 89.24 | 0.1  | 0.0  |
| 1 July, 2007  | 8.3           | 325.9    | III       | 82 | 11.15 | 55.75 | 0.2  | 0.0  |
| 2 July, 2007  | 22            | 292.1    | III       | 82 | 11.15 | 55.75 | 1.8  | 1.1  |
| 5 July, 2007  | 11.7          | 69.6     | III       | 82 | 11.15 | 55.75 | 0.0  | 0.0  |
| 10 July, 2007 | 5.9           | 80.8     | III       | 82 | 11.15 | 55.75 | 0.5  | 0.2  |
3.1 Statistical Analysis

The runoff from the model i.e. $Q_{\text{mod}}$ is compared with the observed runoff, $Q_{\text{obs}}$ with a simple statistical analysis. The statistical data obtained from the model predicted and observed data has been obtained from each individual period for three years from 2007 – 2009, correlation is evaluated. The correlation for the year 2007 has a high value showing the method applicability by this method is reliable, and a slight decrease and increase in 2008 with $r = 0.70$ and in 2009 with $r = 0.75$ respectively, shows good level of accuracy. The correlation for the periods 2007 – 2009 has correlated with $r = 0.78$, showing the results that runoff estimation using NRCS – Curve Number method is quite good and provide us a simple method of application and cost effective.

The results predicted by this method is good enough to estimate the amount of runoff caused by rainfall in the watershed. Fig.4 and Fig.5 shows the variations of rainfall and observed runoff after initial abstraction and comparison between model predicted and observed runoff following a rhythm fluctuation are well concentrated which shows the reliability of NRCS – Curve Number Method.

The correlation coefficient between the predicted and observed runoff shows a high value ($r=0.78$) indicating the method is reliable in predicting the surface runoff of the catchment which is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Correlation between Runoff Model and Observed values

| Year   | No. of values (n) | Correlation (r) |
|--------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 2007   | 9                 | 0.91            |
| 2008   | 7                 | 0.70            |
| 2009   | 9                 | 0.75            |
| 2007-2009 | 25             | 0.78            |

4. Conclusion

It was observed by analyzing the rainfall data in the study area is more concentrated in monsoon season only. The changes in Land Cover and AMC affect the value of Curve Number and they in turn influence Surface Runoff. The
model performs very well in fairly saturated soil conditions or high soil moisture. In conclusion, the NRCS – CN method gives better prediction on surface runoff from the basin in fairly saturated soils.

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