Runoff Coefficients for Various Regions in India: An Overview

C. P. Kumar, Former Scientist 'G', National Institute of Hydrology, Roorkee - 247667, India

Abstract

Runoff coefficients are an essential component in hydrological modelling, as they provide a measure of the amount of rainfall that can be expected to run off a particular area or basin. In India, where water resources are scarce and unevenly distributed, accurate estimation of runoff coefficients is crucial for effective water management. This article provides a comprehensive overview of runoff coefficients for various regions in India. The article highlights the factors that influence runoff coefficients, such as topography, soil types, land use, and vegetation cover. It also presents the methods used for estimating runoff coefficients, including the Soil Conservation Service Curve Number (SCS-CN) method and artificial neural network (ANN) techniques. Finally, the article emphasizes the importance of continually monitoring and updating runoff coefficients to accurately predict and manage water resources in India.

Introduction

Runoff is a critical hydrological parameter that plays a vital role in determining the surface water availability and water balance in any region. Runoff coefficient is a dimensionless factor that represents the proportion of rainfall that is converted into runoff over a particular area. It is a crucial parameter in hydrological modelling, and its estimation is essential for water resource management, flood control, and irrigation planning.

In India, runoff coefficients vary significantly from region to region, depending on various factors such as topography, soil type, land use, and rainfall intensity. In this article, we will explore the different runoff coefficients in various regions and river basins in India.

Factors Affecting Runoff Coefficient

The runoff coefficient is influenced by several factors, including the following:

Topography: The slope of the land surface plays a crucial role in determining the runoff coefficient. Steeper slopes have higher runoff coefficients as water flows faster over them and does not get enough time to infiltrate into the soil.

Soil Type: The infiltration capacity of soil determines the amount of water that can be absorbed into the ground. Soils with high infiltration rates have lower runoff coefficients, while soils with low infiltration rates have higher runoff coefficients.

Land Use: Different land uses have different infiltration rates and surface roughness, which can significantly affect the runoff coefficient. For instance, forests and grasslands have lower runoff coefficients than urban areas, which have higher runoff coefficients due to the presence of impervious surfaces.

Rainfall Intensity: The intensity and duration of rainfall also play a vital role in determining the runoff coefficient. Heavy rainfall events with high intensity and short duration result in higher runoff coefficients than light rainfall events with low intensity and long duration.

Evapotranspiration: Evapotranspiration is the process by which water is returned to the atmosphere through plant transpiration and soil evaporation. Areas with high evapotranspiration rates have lower runoff coefficients as more water is absorbed into the ground.

Methods for Estimating Runoff Coefficients

Here are some methods commonly used for estimating runoff coefficients.

Soil Conservation Service Curve Number (SCS-CN) method: This method is widely used for estimating runoff coefficients in India. The SCS-CN method uses land use, soil type, and antecedent soil moisture conditions to calculate a curve number, which is then used to estimate the runoff coefficient.

Rational method: The Rational method is a widely used empirical method for estimating peak runoff rates in urban areas. This method uses the rainfall intensity, the area of the catchment, and the runoff coefficient to estimate the peak runoff rate.

Artificial Neural Network (ANN) techniques: ANN is a machine learning technique used for estimating runoff coefficients. It uses a set of input variables such as rainfall, land use, soil type, topography, and vegetation cover, to predict the output variable, which is the runoff coefficient.

Geographic Information System (GIS) techniques: GIS techniques can be used to estimate runoff coefficients by integrating data on topography, land use, soil type, and other parameters. The GIS-based methods can provide a spatially distributed estimate of runoff coefficients.

These methods are not exhaustive, and there are many other techniques available for estimating runoff coefficients. The choice of the method depends on the availability of data, the size and complexity of the catchment, and the level of accuracy required in the estimation.

Runoff Coefficient for Various Regions in India

The runoff coefficient values in India vary widely depending on the region and the factors mentioned above. Here, we will discuss the different runoff coefficients in various regions in India.

Himalayan Region

The Himalayan region is characterized by steep slopes, high rainfall, and a predominance of forests and grasslands. The runoff coefficient in this region varies from 0.2 to 0.4, depending on the slope, soil type, and land use. The higher runoff coefficients are observed in areas with steeper slopes and less vegetation cover, while lower runoff coefficients are observed in areas with flatter slopes and more vegetation cover.

Indo-Gangetic Plain

The Indo-Gangetic plain is a vast alluvial plain in northern India, covering an area of approximately 700,000 km^2. The plain is characterized by low slopes, fertile soils, and a predominance of agricultural land use. The runoff coefficient in this region varies from 0.2 to 0.3, depending on the soil type and land use. The lower runoff coefficients are observed in areas with high infiltration rates, such as sandy soils and well-drained agricultural lands.

Peninsular India

Peninsular India is a large landmass in southern India, characterized by a diverse range of topography, soil types, and land uses. The runoff coefficient in this region varies widely, ranging from 0.1 to 0.5, depending on the factors mentioned above. The higher runoff coefficients are observed in areas with steep slopes, shallow soils, and low vegetation cover, while lower runoff coefficients are observed in areas with gentle slopes, deep soils, and dense vegetation cover.

Northeast India

Northeast India is a hilly and mountainous region, characterized by high rainfall, dense forests, and steep slopes. The runoff coefficient in this region varies from 0.3 to 0.5, depending on the topography and land use. The higher runoff coefficients are observed in areas with steeper slopes and less vegetation cover, while lower runoff coefficients are observed in areas with flatter slopes and more vegetation cover.

Western Ghats

The Western Ghats are a mountain range running parallel to the western coast of India, covering an area of approximately 160,000 km^2. The region is characterized by high rainfall, dense forests, and steep slopes. The runoff coefficient in this region varies from 0.3 to 0.5, depending on the slope and land use. The higher runoff coefficients are observed in areas with steeper slopes and less vegetation cover, while lower runoff coefficients are observed in areas with flatter slopes and more vegetation cover.

Coastal Plains

The coastal plains of India are a narrow strip of land along the eastern and western coasts of India, covering an area of approximately 60,000 km^2. The region is characterized by low slopes, fertile soils, and a predominance of agricultural land use. The runoff coefficient in this region varies from 0.2 to 0.3, depending on the soil type and land use. The lower runoff coefficients are observed in areas with high infiltration rates, such as sandy soils and well-drained agricultural lands.

Central India

Central India is a large region in the middle of India, covering an area of approximately 500,000 km^2. The region is characterized by a mix of topography, soil types, and land uses. The runoff coefficient in this region varies widely, ranging from 0.1 to 0.5, depending on the factors mentioned above. The higher runoff coefficients are observed in areas with steep

slopes, shallow soils, and low vegetation cover, while lower runoff coefficients are observed in areas with gentle slopes, deep soils, and dense vegetation cover.

Overall, it is important to note that the runoff coefficient for any particular region in India is not fixed and can vary over time due to changes in land use, climate, and other factors. Therefore, it is important to continually monitor and update runoff coefficients in order to accurately predict and manage water resources.

Conclusion

The runoff coefficient is a crucial parameter in hydrological modelling and water resource management. The runoff coefficient values in India vary significantly depending on the region and the factors mentioned above. The Himalayan region has a runoff coefficient of 0.2 to 0.4, the Indo-Gangetic plain has a runoff coefficient of 0.2 to 0.3, Peninsular India has a runoff coefficient of 0.1 to 0.5, Northeast India has a runoff coefficient of 0.3 to 0.5, the Western Ghats have a runoff coefficient of 0.3 to 0.5, the coastal plains have a runoff coefficient of 0.2 to 0.3, and central India has a runoff coefficient of 0.1 to 0.5. These values are critical in determining the surface water availability and water balance in these regions, and their estimation is essential for flood control, irrigation planning, and sustainable water resource management.

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