

A STUDY OF CHANGES IN RAINFALL PATTERNS
IN THE DRY ZONE OF SRI LANKA

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Short term climatic changes in Sri Lanka is a topic that is currently drawing a lot of attention. This paper examines some aspects of changes in rainfall patterns over the 36 year period 1950 - 1986, with special emphasis on ten day rainfall totals, the number of dry and wet days within a given period and the risk of long dry spells and wet spells.

In order to study climatic changes, fifteen sites in the Dry Zone were selected and the 36-year period was split into two sets of years. The first set contained daily rainfall amounts for the first 18 years 1951 - 1968 and the second set consisted of rainfall amounts for the second 18 years 1969 - 1986. Characteristics of interest were studied for the two sets and the results compared using appropriate diagrams.

This analysis revealed a considerable change in the rainfall patterns between the two sets of years in consideration to rainfall amounts. For nearly all the stations studied a clear decrease in rainfall amounts was observed over the two periods. However for the other aspects considered (e.g. number of dry and wet days, risk of long dry spells and wet spells) the changes were not so clear cut.

References

Seneviratne E.K. A model fitting analysis of Daily Rainfall Data with Applications in Agricultural Planning for Sri Lanka (1985) Ph.D Thesis

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