

A STUDY OF SOME AGRICULTURALLY IMPORTANT  
EVENTS USING DAILY RAINFALL DATA

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The annual rainfall pattern and the commencement of the main rainy seasons in Sri Lanka play a very important role in agriculture. In this paper 5 sites, distributed over the dry zone of Sri Lanka, were used to study 3 agroclimatic events, namely rainfall percentiles throughout the year, dry spells and the start of the Maha rainy season. Simple statistical techniques were used to analyse these events. Daily rainfall data for the years 1951 to 1986 were available at all five sites.

Definitions similar to those given in Stern et al' were used for the start of the rainy season. In particular, a potential starting date, defined as the 1st day after 14th September with more than "X" mm of rainfall in two consecutive days with no dry spell of length 10 in the next 30 days, were utilised.

The results indicate that all five sites have a fairly stable Maha rainy season. Mannar in particular experiences long droughts during the months June to September.

Trincomalee generally starts its Maha rainy season in mid October. Mannar, Madawachchiya and Valachchanei generally begin to receive the Maha rains by the end of October. The last to receive the Maha rains is Kadukkumunei.

References :

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Analysis of daily rainfall measurements to give agronomically useful results. I. Direct method, Exp. Agri, 81:223-36 II. A modelling approach, Exp. Agri., 81:237-53
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