

FLOOD OF JUNE 1989 - METEOROLOGICAL ASPECTS

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Out of the 21 floods that have occurred in Sri Lanka since 1947, nine major ones. The flood of June 1989 classified as a major flood occurred in early June 1989 and affected the districts of Colombo, Kalutara, Ratnapura Gampaha, Galle, N' Eliya, Matara and Kegalle. In this paper an attempt has been made to identify some of the meteorological factors that contributed to the heavy rainfall which occurred during the period 29 May to 03 June 1989.

This study revealed that the maximum rainfall occurred at an elevation of between 300m and 1000m above mean sea level and that the Southwesterly or westerly winds across the island had a peak between about 600m and 1000 m above mean sea level.

The heavy rain was thus due to the orographic effect and this was supported by the wind field across the island.

Synoptically, the Intertropical Convergence Zone was North of the island during this period and a surface low pressure area was observed near the island on 02 June 1989.