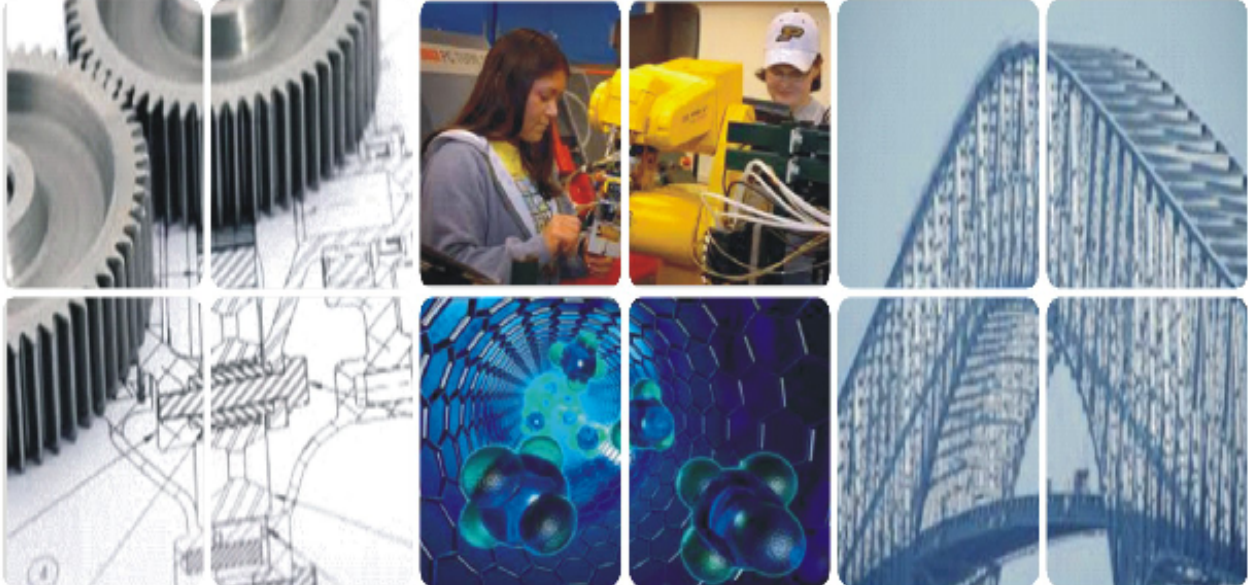


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Message

Scientific discoveries and advancement affect our lives by providing new policies and regulations that provide broad national direction and by new products that enhance our lives. Technology and engineering translate scientific knowledge into action. At the same time, technological innovations often require further research into materials, devices and processes. Engineers use the knowledge of science, mathematics, economics and appropriate experience to find suitable solutions to the problems and helps in creating an appropriate mathematical model for analysis.

This special issue on Engineering and Technology 2012 of Anvikshiki brings together the latest developments in technology and gives a base for the future work to be done in respective areas.

I wish the journal to be a great success.

Bhawna Verma
Assistant Professor
Department of Chemical Engineering & Technology
Center of Advanced Study
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I express my sincere gratitude to the editorial board of prestigious journal ANVIKSHIKI for believing in my technical competencies and choosing me as a reviewer of special issue on Engineering and Technology 2012. I understand that with great role comes great responsibilities. I will try to fulfill this highly valued responsibility with best of my technical knowledge and human values. This journal has been a guiding beacon for scientific community for numerous years & has gained the prestige due to it's original & rich articles. The contribution of ANVIKSHIKI in field of scientific research is immense.

I wish for the phenomenal success of special issue on Engineering and Technology,2012 of ANVIKSHINKI.

Prabhat

P K S Dikshit
Professor
Department of Civil Engineering
Institute of Technology
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Varanasi 221005

Editorial Note

As my nomination as an Subject Expert and Editor for this Special Issue on Engineering & Technology 2012, I have worked a lot to make it successful. I do whatever task is at hand to the best of my ability. I take pride in my work and give hundred percent every time. For those submissions that were not suitable for publication, we tried to let authors know very quickly of our decision, giving them a chance to submit their manuscript to another journal if they so desire. I am fully aware that the prestige and quality of an ANVIKSHIKI Journal depends upon the altruistic participation of reviewers and the fairness and promptness with which the review process is conducted. In this regard, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to all board members for their nice cooperation and sustained effort. However, because of the increased number of submissions and the diversity of research fields involved, we have a difficult task ahead of us requiring a more rapid tempo of review. At the same time, from now on the authors themselves should assume their own inescapable responsibilities. The editor will return immediately any manuscript that is incomprehensible to reviewers on account of substandard grammar and syntax.

Finally, it is a pleasure to thank my Editor in chief for their nice cooperation and valuable suggestion. Now, we all look forward to embarking in a journey that can take ANVIKSHIKI on to the next plateau of excellence.

I hope you will enjoy reading this issue and we welcome your feedback .

With best regards,



Jyoti Prakash

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RUNOFF ESTIMATION FROM SCS-CN: A CRITICAL REVIEW

KAILASH NARAYAN*, SABITA MADHVI SINGH** AND P. K. S. DIKSHIT***

Declaration

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Abstract

One of the popular methods for estimating the depth of surface runoff, water recharge, stream flow, infiltration, soil moisture content, and landfill leachate production from precipitation for a given rainfall event is the Soil Conservation Service Curve Number (SCS-CN)method. Of late, several inconsistencies in its soil moisture accounting procedure have been pointed and a more rational procedure suggested. Recently, a modification incorporating an expression for estimation of initial soil moisture store level, a crucial parameter, was suggested. The modifiedSCS-CN perform better than all other versions in all classified applications based on land use, soil type, combinations of land use and soil type, and precipitation regimes.Accurate surface runoff estimation techniques suitable for ungauged watersheds are relevant to areas such as India where hydrologic gauging stations are not widely available. The natural resources conservation services curve number (NRCS-CN) method is one of the most widely used methods for quick and accurate estimation of surface runoff from ungauged watersheds.

Key Words : SCS-CN, NRCS-CN,Rainfall,Runoff

1. Introduction

Most of the agricultural watersheds in India are ungauged, having no past records of the rainfall–runoff processes (Sarangiet *al.*, 2005). This has led to the development of techniques for estimating surface runoff from ungauged basins (Chattopadhyay and Choudhury, 2006). Of the several methods for runoff estimation from ungauged watersheds, the soil conservation service curve number (SCS-CN) (renamed as natural resources conservation services curve number (NRCS-CN), USDA 1994) method along with its derivatives has been widely applied to ungauged watershed systems and has proved to be a rapid and accurate estimator of surface runoff (Mishra *et al.*, 2003). The watershed hydrologic responses that lead to the generation of surface runoff are governed by the interaction of precipitation with the topographic,

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land use and soil physical properties of the land surface. Therefore, the use of a geographic information system (GIS) is preferred over the traditional techniques such as quantify surface runoff by storing and analysing the factors responsible for runoff. The estimation process becomes more efficient, interactive and less cumbersome when the GIS is used for storing, interpreting and displaying the data required in CN-based runoff estimation techniques.

The method is simple and useful for ungauged watersheds and accounts for four major runoff producing watershed characteristics, viz., soil type, land use/treatment, surface condition and antecedent moisture conditions (Ponce and Hawkins, 1996; Mishra and Singh, 2003). The method has been a topic of much discussion in hydrologic literature for the last three decades (McCuen, 1982; Hjelmfelt, 1991; Hawkins, 1993; Steenhuis *et al.*, 1995; Ponce and Hawkins, 1996; Yu, 1998; Mishra and Singh, 1999, 2002, 2003; Michel *et al.*, 2005; Schneider and McCuen, 2005; Mishra *et al.*, 2006; Sahu *et al.*, 2007). Despite several modifications of the SCS-CN method have been suggested and reported in literature, a need for further improvement of the method has been experienced (Ponce and Hawkins, 1996; Mishra and Singh, 2002). Michel *et al.* (2005) pointed out several inconsistencies in the soil moisture accounting (SMA) procedure of the SCS-CN method and proposed a more rational procedure.

An estimation of surface runoff is essential for reducing sediments and consequent hazards because runoff is the driving force behind soil erosion. Although many hydrologic models are available for the estimation of runoff, most physically based models are limited because of their large number of input parameters and complicated calibration requirements (Wu *et al.*, 1993; Kothyari and Jain, 1997). The objective of this paper is application of CN in efficient way so we can maintain our land/watershed from the erosion of soil.

2. Methodology

2.1 Background of SCS-CN

The CN was initially developed as a design tool to estimate runoff from rainfall events on Agricultural fields. (i) The sources of the original data are very obscure and difficult to verify. (ii) The method is now used as The method for computing peak runoff rates and volumes for Urban Hydrology. (iii) TR-55 (Technical Release no. 55), a simplified NRCS tool essentially joins the NRCS runoff equation with unit hydrograph theory for the computation of these runoff rates.

The SCS (1972) defined the following four types of runoff: (i) *Channel* runoff-occurs when rain falls on a flowing stream or on the impervious surfaces of a stream flow-measuring installation. (ii) *Surface runoff* occurs only when the rainfall is greater than the infiltration rate. (iii) *Subsurface* runoff-occurs when the rainfall meets an underground zone of lower transmission. (iv) *Base flow*-occurs when there is a fairly steady flow from the natural storage.

The SCS-CN method estimates direct runoff with the curve numbers indicating the proportions of surface and subsurface flow, larger curve numbers represent a greater proportion of surface runoff. Research has shown that the method is less accurate for smaller curve numbers, representing subsurface flow.

Essentially, four steps are necessary to evaluate runoff from intense rainfall by the method developed by the SCS (1972). The first step is to determine the hydrologic soil group of the particular soil to be studied from a master list of soils prepared by the SCS. All soils are classified in one of four different categories-ranked A-D on the basis of their runoff potential. *Class A* soils mostly consist of deep, well drained sands and gravels with low runoff potential and high infiltration and water transmission rates. *Class B* soils have moderately fine to moderately coarse textures and are considered to have moderate infiltration rates when completely wet. *Class C* soils have moderately fine to fine textures

with slow infiltration and water transmission rates. *Class D* soils are primarily clay soils or soils with clay pans that have slow infiltration rates when wet.

The second step is to determine the five-day antecedent moisture condition (AMC) of the particular soil from the daily precipitation record. This is also referred to as Antecedent Runoff Condition (ARC). This provides a measure of soil wetness. In this situation, the precipitation totals that will shift the soil from one antecedent moisture class to another, vary with the season of the year. One series of five-day precipitation totals is applied to the dormant season and a second series of five-day precipitation totals is used during the growing season. The AMC values for the upper, average, and lower conditions are termed AMC I, AMC II, and AMC III, respectively. Table 1 gives the seasonal five-day accumulated rainfall limits for the three antecedent moisture condition classes.

The third step is to decide on the basis of the land cover, the cultivation treatment, the hydrologic condition of the soil, and the hydrologic soil group of the particular soil—the actual runoff curve number to use in determining daily runoff from precipitation. Land use, cover treatment, and hydrologic condition can be determined based on the following summaries from the SCS (SCS, 1972).

Total 5-Day Antecedent Rainfall

TABLE 1 Seasonal five-day rainfall totals for various antecedent moisture condition classes

Antecedent moisture Condition Class	Dormant season(In)	Growing season(In)
Dry I	<0.5	<1.4
Average II	0.5 to 1.1	1.4 to 2.1
Wet III	>1.1	>2.1

The Runoff Curve Number (RCN) can be adjusted for differing AMC based upon the above equations and criteria.

2.2 Theory of SCS-CN Model

The method is summarized by using curve number to represent a single parameter relation between rainfall depth and runoff depth. The single parameter relation is *S*; the transform of *S* is CN (Cloppe, 1980). The SCS method uses only three factors to modify *S*: season of year and antecedent precipitation which together, provide a rough measure of the expected value of soil moisture; the hydrologic soil cover complex which reflects the effects of vegetation; and land use which represents some, but not all, of the watershed influences on infiltration and overland flow (Martin, 1979; Montgomery, 1980; Clopper, 1980). However, many factors influence infiltration and therefore can be correlated with *S* including rainfall pattern, initial soil moisture, tillage practice, physical soil properties, and influences of vegetation roots and stems. Factors which influence overland flow and flow attenuation include surface roughness (resulting from both soil and vegetation), surface storage, slope, size of watershed overland flow area, and rate of precipitation. Thus, the CN method has been shown to be sensitive to the selection of the curve numbers which differ with soil type, vegetation cover, and hydrologic soil conditions.

Geetha *et al.* (2005) studied the applicability of the modified NRCS-CN concept to identify the dominant runoff generation process in watersheds. The pronounced modifications were the incorporation of seasonal variation of CN and variations in the daily storages using evaporation and transpiration estimates.

2.3 Modification in SCS-CN

Mishra and Singh (2002) modified this method for long-term hydrology simulations by incorporating an evapotranspiration component, modifying the initial abstraction estimation techniques and extending it for computation of infiltration and runoff rates. Bhuyan *et al.* (2001) used the modified curve number

(CN) technique for predicting surface runoff by adjusting the CNs based on the estimated AMC ratios. It was shown that the CN approach could be used for accurate prediction of runoff depths from storm events over ungauged watersheds.

2.4 CN Methods used in the Interface

To date, researchers have reported eight modifications of the original NRCS-CN approaches (Mishra and Singh, 2003). Considering the application of the modified CN methods under different topographic, hydrologic soil group and land use conditions, and their contrasting characteristics relating to initial abstraction and antecedent moisture conditions, three modified CN methods were selected for inclusion in the interface as well as the original NRCS-CN formulae. The methods are briefed in the following subsections.

(i) NRCS-CN method : The NRCS-CN method is based on the water balance equation and two fundamental hypotheses (SCS, 1956). The first hypothesis equates the ratio of the amount of direct surface runoff Q to the total rainfall P (or maximum potential surface runoff) with the ratio of the amount of infiltration F_c to the amount of the potential maximum retention S . The second hypothesis relates the initial abstraction I_a to the potential maximum retention. Thus, the NRCS-CN method consisted of the following equations:

(a) Water balance equation:

$$P = I_a + F_c + Q \quad (1)$$

(b) Proportional equality hypothesis:

$$\frac{Q}{P - I_a} = \frac{F_c}{S} \quad (2)$$

(c) I_a - S hypothesis:

$$I_a = \lambda S \quad (3)$$

Where P is the total rainfall; I_a the initial abstraction; F_c the cumulative infiltration F_c excluding I_a ; Q the direct runoff; S the potential maximum retention or infiltration; and λ the regional parameter dependent on geologic and climatic factors ($0.1 \leq \lambda \leq 0.3$). The relation between I_a and S was developed by analysing the rainfall and runoff data from experimental small watersheds (SCS, USDA, 1956) and is expressed as $I_a = 0.2S$. Combining the water balance equation and proportional equality hypothesis, the NRCS-CN method is represented as:

$$Q = \frac{(P - F_c)^2}{(P - F_c + S)} \quad \text{for } P > I_a \quad (4)$$

$$Q = 0 \quad \text{for } P \leq I_a \quad (5)$$

The potential maximum retention storage S of watershed is related to a CN, which is a function of land use, land treatments, soil type and antecedent moisture condition of watershed. The CN is dimensionless and its value varies from 0 to 100. The S -value in mm can be obtained from CN by using the relationship:

$$S = \frac{25,400}{CN} - 254 \quad (6)$$

(ii) Modified CN method (CN I) : The modified CN I method is based on the concept of zero initial abstraction ($I_a = 0$), i.e. immediate ponding for calculating the runoff depth Q from a given rainfall depth P . Using this concept in the original NRCS-CN proportionality hypothesis (i.e. Eq. (2)), the resulting equation for surface runoff estimation was obtained:

$$Q = \frac{P^2}{S+P} \quad (7)$$

The two extremely dry and wet scenarios, which may produce runoff, were not considered in the original NRCS-CN method due to its concept of runoff occurring only after fulfilling the initial abstraction I_a requirements. Therefore, this modified CN method was considered in this study to account for the conditions prevailing in watershed systems under high-intensity rainfall events.

(iii) *Modified CN method (CN II)*: In this modification of the CN method, the initial abstraction I_a was modified by associating a non-dimensional parameter λ with the potential maximum retention S , which is represented as $I_a - \lambda S$. The parameter λ depends on the time of ponding t_p and Horton's constant a and are associated as: $\lambda = a t_p$. In contrast with the hypothesis of the original NRCS-CN method, which assumes the time of ponding to be zero, this modification considered the time of ponding from the beginning of rainfall to the initiation of the runoff process. Under these modifications, the equation for estimation of surface runoff using the modified CN II was:

$$Q = \frac{(P - \lambda S)^2}{(P - S(\lambda - 1))} \quad (8)$$

(iv) *Modified CN method (CN III)*: In this modification, the cumulative infiltration F_c parameter used in the original NRCS-CN method was divided into basic and dynamic components during the rainfall-runoff processes. The modified CN III method highlighted the basic infiltration component during the rainfall-runoff processes, whereas the original NRCS-CN method did not consider this parameter directly. However, in the hypothesis of the NRCS-CN method, the actual infiltration ($F_c - I_a$) was considered without any specific attention both basic and dynamic infiltration components in the runoff generation process. Therefore, the modified CN III method could provide meaningful and accurate predictions of runoff for longer duration rainfall events, in which the basic infiltration component is more predominant. Therefore, in the original NRCS-CN hypothesis, by substituting the components of F_s and F_d against appropriate parameters of Eq. (2), the final expression of surface runoff depth was :

$$Q = \frac{(P - F_s)^2}{(P - F_s + S)} \quad (9)$$

2.5 Co-relation between Modified CN

Three AMCs were defined as dry (lower limit of moisture or upper limit of S), moderate (normal or average soil moisture condition), and wet (upper limit of moisture or lower limit of S), and denoted as AMC I, AMC II, and AMC III, respectively (Mishra and Singh, 2003). The CN value of AMC II (CNII) was provided by the SCS-CN manual and the CN value of AMC I (CNI) and CN value of AMC III (CNIII) can be calculated by applying the following equations (USDA SCS, 1985):

$$CN I = \frac{4.2 CN II}{(10 - 0.059 CN II)} \quad (10)$$

$$CN III = \frac{23 CN II}{(10 + 0.13 CN II)} \quad (11)$$

2.6 Solution of Runoff Equation

Over the years, data collected in the field has been analyzed. This data has been produced in a number of forms. One is graphically as an “X-Y” graph, shown below. On the “x” axis is the independent variable, in this case the amount of rainfall in inches. On the “y” axis is the dependent variable, the amount of direct runoff of water in inches (TR-55 (Technical Release no. 55)).

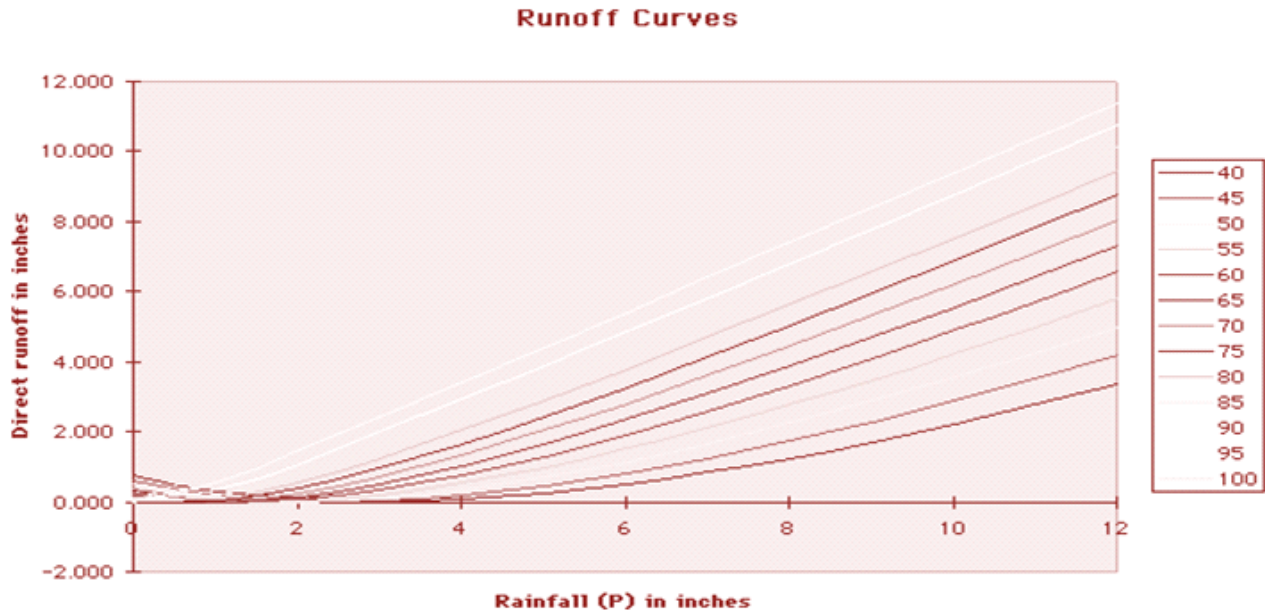


Figure1 Solution Of Runoff Equation

3. Result

In India, accurate information on runoff is scarce and only available in a few selected sites. Thus, there is an urgent need to generate information on basin runoff and sediment yield for the acceleration of the watershed development and management programmes (Zadeet *et al.*, 2005). The SCS-CN model is a simple, empirical model with clearly stated assumptions and few data requirements. Therefore, it has been widely used for water resource management, storm water modeling and runoff estimation for single rainfall events in small agricultural or urban watersheds (Greene and Cruise, 1995; Tsihrintzis and Hamid, 1997; Lewis *et al.*, 2000; Chandrmohan and Durbude, 2001; He, 2003; Liu *et al.*, 2005; Mishra *et al.*, 2006; Liu and Li, 2008; Sahu *et al.*, 2010a).

4. Conclusion

The Curve Number method (SCS, 1972), also known as the Hydrologic Soil Cover Complex Method, is a versatile and widely used procedure for runoff estimation. In this method, runoff producing capability is expressed by a numerical value varying between 0 - 100. In the past 30 years, the SCS method has been used by a few researchers because it gives consistently usable results (Rao *et al.*, 1996; Sharma *et al.* 2001; Chandramohan and Durbude, 2001; Sharma and Kumar, 2002) for runoff estimation. On the basis of corroboration of modified CN the finding that the NRCS-CN-based surface runoff predictions are very sensitive to the antecedent moisture conditions (AMC) of watershed systems. This necessitates further modification of the CN-based methods to include more limiting scenarios and any realistic indices to account for the antecedent moisture conditions prevailing in the watershed during and before the rainfall event. When CN and the amount of rainfall have been determined for the watershed, determine runoff by using Figure 1.

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