MAH/MUL/ 03051/2012 ISSN :2319 9318

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Tal: Palus, Dist: Sangli Maharashtra (India) 416 308

Department of Economics & IQAC

Organized

ICSSR, New Delhi Sponsored

Two Day National Seminar on

"Agricultural Transformation and Rural Development in India: Issues, Challenges and Possibilities"

March, 2025

"Printed by: **Harshwardhan Publication Pvt.Ltd.** Published by **Ghodke Archana Rajendra** & Printed & published at Harshwardhan Publication Pvt.Ltd.,At.Post. Limbaganesh Dist,Beed -431122 (Maharashtra) and Editor **Dr. Gholap Bapu Ganpat**.

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Crop Health Assessment of the Cauvery Basin Using NDVI

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Abstract :

The Cauvery Basin, a critical river basin in South India, sustains agriculture for millions of people, supporting major crops like rice, sugarcane, and groundnut. The basin's agricultural productivity is significantly influenced by water availability, rainfall variability, and climate change. Traditional methods of crop health assessment are often labor-intensive and cannot efficiently cover large areas. Remote sensing and Geographical Information System (GIS) technologies, particularly the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI), offer a promising solution for large-scale crop health monitoring. NDVI values, ranging from -1 to +1, provide insights into plant vigor, stress, and overall health. High NDVI values generally indicate healthy, dense vegetation, while lower values signal potential stressors such as drought, nutrient deficiencies, or disease. This study focuses on the application of NDVI in assessing crop health in the Cauvery Basin by analyzing satellite data over multiple cropping seasons. It highlights how NDVI can detect crop stress, predict yield, and optimize water management practices.

Key Words: Crop Health, NDVI, Cauvery Basin, Agriculture

1. Introduction

The Cauvery River Basin spans the Indian states of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Kerala. The basin supports diverse agricultural activities, with crops such as rice, sugarcane, groundnut, and cotton being the mainstay. Agriculture in the region heavily depends on the monsoon rains and irrigation from the Cauvery River. However, irregular rainfall patterns, seasonal water shortages, and competing demands for water across the basin challenge sustainable agricultural practices. The need for timely and accurate crop health monitoring is crucial to minimize yield losses and optimize agricultural productivity.

NDVI, derived from remote sensing satellite imagery, is an essential tool for monitoring vegetation health and can assist in the detection of crop stress, water scarcity, and pest infestations. This study explores the potential of NDVI for assessing crop health in the Cauvery Basin and aims to provide insights into better water resource management and agricultural practices.

2. Study Area: The Cauvery Basin:

The Cauvery Basin spans approximately 81,000 square kilometers, encompassing diverse climatic and geographical conditions. The basin is divided into two primary zones:

Upper Basin (Karnataka): Characterized by mountainous terrain and less rainfall.

Lower Basin (Tamil Nadu): Features fertile plains, benefiting from better irrigation infrastructure and more consistent rainfall.

Agricultural activity is largely dependent on the Cauvery River and its tributaries for irrigation. The area experiences a tropical monsoon climate, with a distinct wet season (June to September) and dry season (October to May). Crops in the region face challenges such as water scarcity, droughts, and also fluctuating temperatures.

3. Objectives:

To Make NDVI map of Cauvery Basin using Spot Vegetation Data

To Interpreted the NDVI Map Of Cauvery Basin.

4. Methodology:

NDVI is a spectral index derived from satellite reflectance data, specifically the red (RED) and near-infrared (NIR) bands of the electromagnetic spectrum. Healthy vegetation absorbs most of the red light for photosynthesis and reflects a significant amount of NIR light, making it possible to assess plant health based on its reflectance properties. NDVI is calculated using the following formula:

NDVI=(NIR”RED)/(NIR+RED)

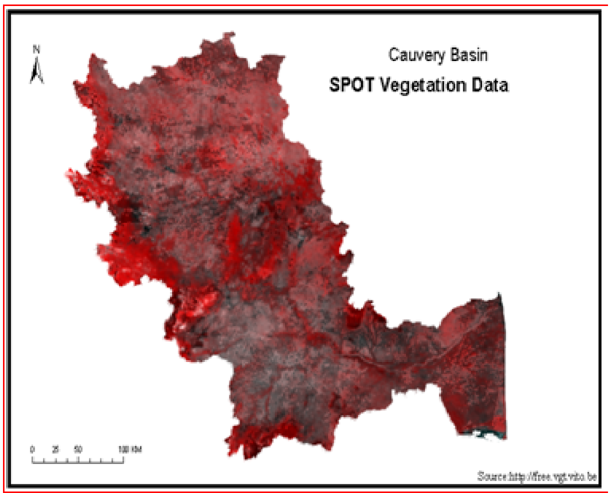
NDVI values range from -1 to +1:

+1: Dense, healthy vegetation.

0: Bare soil, water bodies, or non-vegetated land.

Negative values: Water bodies, snow, or clouds.

Satellite imagery from sources like Spot, Landsat, MODIS, or Sentinel-2 provides the required data for NDVI calculation. These satellites offer multi-temporal, cloud-free images with a relatively high spatial resolution, ideal for large-scale crop health monitoring in the Cauvery Basin.



5. Applications of NDVI in Crop Health Monitoring

5.1. Crop Stress Detection

NDVI is particularly useful in identifying early signs of crop stress caused by water scarcity, nutrient deficiency, disease, or pest infestation. Stress factors typically reduce chlorophyll concentration in plants, leading to lower NDVI values. By continuously monitoring NDVI levels, farmers can detect areas of stress before they are visible to the naked eye, allowing for timely intervention.

5.2. Yield Prediction

NDVI has been correlated with crop yield in various studies. High NDVI values generally indicate healthy crops with greater potential for higher yields. By assessing NDVI throughout the growing season, researchers and farmers can estimate crop yield more accurately, which aids in planning for harvest, storage, and market strategies.

5.3. Water Management

Water stress has a direct impact on plant health and NDVI values. NDVI-based monitoring allows for the identification of regions where crops are facing water stress, enabling farmers to optimize irrigation and water resource management. Satellite-based NDVI imagery can be used to monitor large-scale agricultural areas, ensuring that water is distributed efficiently across the farm.

5.4. Disease and Pest Monitoring

NDVI data can help in the detection of crop diseases and pest infestations, which often lead to changes in plant color, reducing photosynthetic activity. Early detection using NDVI can lead to timely application of pesticides or fungicides, reducing crop loss and minimizing the use of chemicals.

6. Advantages of NDVI for Crop Health Assessment:

Cost-Effective: Remote sensing via NDVI is less expensive than traditional field surveys.

Wide Coverage: NDVI allows for monitoring large agricultural areas, making it ideal for commercial farming.

Timely Monitoring: NDVI can provide near real-time data, allowing for early detection of crop issues.

Non-Invasive: NDVI does not require physical contact with crops, making it a non-invasive monitoring technique.

7. Application of NDVI for Crop Health Assessment in the Cauvery Basin:

7.1. Crop Stress and Water Scarcity Detection: Water availability is a critical factor in crop health. NDVI can be used to monitor crop stress related to water scarcity. During dry spells or in areas with limited irrigation access, crops often exhibit reduced photosynthetic activity, leading to a decrease in NDVI values. In the Cauvery Basin, the upper regions (Karnataka) experience more significant water stress, particularly during the Rabi season, where the reliance on irrigation from the Cauvery River becomes essential. NDVI data has shown lower values during these dry periods, correlating with water deficit and crop stress.

7.2. Temporal and Spatial Analysis of Crop Health: NDVI values vary across different seasons, offering insights into the health of crops throughout their growing periods. In this study, two main cropping seasons in the Cauvery Basin were analyzed:

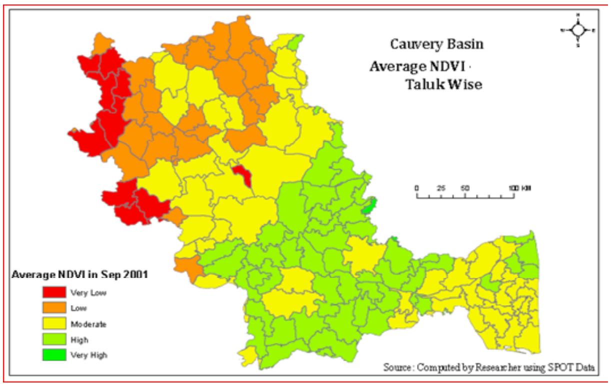
Kharif Season (June to September): The monsoon season, with rice as the primary crop.

Rabi Season (October to March): The post-monsoon season, with crops like sugarcane, groundnut, and pulses grown.

During the Kharif season, NDVI values typically peak due to the favorable rainfall and moisture availability. However, drought years show a marked decrease in NDVI, particularly in rain-fed areas. During the Rabi season, areas dependent on river irrigation exhibit higher NDVI values, indicating better crop health compared to areas that rely solely on groundwater.

7.3. Yield Prediction and Monitoring: NDVI values have been strongly correlated with crop yield in various studies. In the Cauvery Basin, early-season NDVI data has been used to predict the final yield for crops like rice and sugarcane. High NDVI values during the vegetative stages of crops are indicative of healthy growth and, therefore, higher yield potential. Conversely, areas with low NDVI values during the growing season often experience reduced yields due to water stress, pest attacks, or nutrient deficiencies. By monitoring NDVI throughout the cropping season, farmers can adjust irrigation schedules, use fertilizers more efficiently, and implement pest management strategies in a timely manner.

8. Results and NDVI Analysis:



8.1. Crop Health and Water Scarcity:

NDVI analysis has shown that the upper Cauvery Basin, particularly in Karnataka, experiences significant drops in NDVI during water-stressed periods. In contrast, the lower basin in Tamilnadu, which has more reliable irrigation systems, maintains higher NDVI values, reflecting better crop health. The temporal variations in NDVI values can be directly related to the availability of water.

8.2. Impact of Irrigation and Water Management:

Areas with improved irrigation infrastructure in Tamilnadu have higher and more stable NDVI values, suggesting that effective water management practices significantly improve crop health. Conversely, regions with poor irrigation facility are access or dependence on rainwater, particularly in the upper basin, exhibit greater variability in NDVI, especially in years of poor monsoon rainfall.

8.3. Drought Impact on Crops:

NDVI values in drought years like 2016 showed significant reductions in the agricultural land for both rice and groundnut crops. Early NDVI data provided accurate early warnings for potential yield loss, allowing farmers to adopt alternative measures such as changing crop varieties or optimizing irrigation.

9. Conclusion:

In central part of Cauvery basin and part of deltaic region have highest extension of drought and extreme dry condition was prevailed. NDVI is a powerful tool for assessing crop health in the Cauvery Basin. It provides valuable insights into crop stress, yield prediction, and the impacts of water availability on agricultural productivity. By leveraging satellite-based NDVI data, farmers and policymakers can make more informed decisions regarding irrigation management, water resource allocation, and crop health monitoring.

The integration of NDVI with other remote sensing technologies, such as thermal infrared imagery, could further enhance crop health assessments and contribute to sustainable agricultural practices in the Cauvery Basin.

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