

**ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECT OF CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS
ON FLOODS IN KELANI RIVER BASIN, SRI LANKA**

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Degree of Master of Science

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Sri Lanka

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Degree of Master of Science

Water Resources Engineering and Management

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Master of Science in Water Resources Engineering and Management

UNESCO Madanjeet Singh Centre for
South Asia Water Management (UMCSAWM)

Department of Civil Engineering
University of Moratuwa
Sri Lanka

June 2023

DECLARATION OF THE CANDIDATE AND SUPERVISOR

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Date

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master
of Engineering in Water Resources Engineering and Management

The above candidate has carried out research for the Master’s Thesis/Dissertation under my supervision.

2023-06-30

Date

Prof. R. L. H. L. Rajapakse

ABSTRACT

Analysis of the Effect of Climate Change Impacts on Floods in Kelani River Basin, Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is highly vulnerable to climate change impacts, including rising land and sea temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, more extreme weather events, and sea-level rise. Notably, climate change has been observed to increase flood frequency, expand flood areas, and intensify flood damages. Previous research in Sri Lanka has mainly focused on rainfall estimation using weather models and examining climate change scenarios. This study aims to improve flood forecasting by analyzing climate change-induced changes in rainfall depths from Intensity-Duration-Frequency (IDF) curves and considering design sea levels. The objective is to gain insights into future flood characteristics, specifically the projected increases in discharges and water levels.

The HEC-HMS Hydrological modelling tool was selected for the hydrological modelling of the entire Kelani Basin, while the HEC-RAS model was used for flood modelling in the Lower Kelani Basin which is downstream from Glencourse. HEC-HMS simulating discharges from rainfall inputs that served as boundary conditions for the HEC-RAS model. The verified models are utilized to simulate the 50-year design rainfall dataset lasting 3 days, incorporating published IDF equations from selected rain gauge locations along with the calibrated models. Rainfall depth multipliers of 1.100, 1.122, and 1.140 were applied to the design rainfall dataset for the RCP4.5, RCP6.0, and RCP8.5 projections, respectively. Simulations also considered sea-level rise values of 0.47 m, 0.48 m, and 0.63 m corresponding to the respective climate change projection scenarios.

Calibration and validation of the three HEC-HMS models (Kelani Upper, Kelani Middle, and Kelani Lower) and the HEC-RAS Flood model for Lower Kelani (downstream to Glencourse) Basin were successfully calibrated using 2016 May and validated using 2017 May flood event data. The Nash Efficiency values during calibration were 0.79, 0.95, and 0.85 for the Kelani Upper, Kelani Middle, and Kelani Lower models, respectively. During validation, the Nash Efficiency values were 0.87, 0.85, and 0.25, respectively. The calibration Nash Efficiency values for the HEC-RAS model were 0.57, 0.56, and 0.52, and the validation Nash Efficiency values were 0.80, 0.57, and 0.53 for the respective models considering Hanwella Discharges, Hanwella Water Levels and Nagalagama Street Water levels, respectively.

The research concluded that, under climate change projections, the Glencourse Peak Discharge is projected to increase by approximately 13.3% to 16.2%. Similarly, at Hanwella, the peak discharge is expected to increase by approximately 6.4% to 8.8%, while the maximum water level is anticipated to rise by approximately 3.1% to 4.2%. Moreover, the maximum water level at Nagalagama Street is likely to experience an increase of around 16.2% to 21.7% under climate change projections.

Keywords: Design Rainfall, HEC-HMS, HEC-RAS, Hourly Data, IDF

DEDICATION

This thesis work is dedicated to my wife Champika, and my two sons Ihansa, and Mihinsa who have been a constant source of support and encouragement during the challenges of academic commitments and life. I am truly thankful for having you in my life. This work is also dedicated to my parents, Nimal and Ranjani, who have always loved me unconditionally and whose good examples have taught me to work hard for the things that I aspire to achieve.

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TABLE OF CONTENT

DECLARATION OF THE CANDIDATE AND SUPERVISOR.....	III
ABSTRACT	IV
DEDICATION	V
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	VI
LIST OF FIGURES.....	X
LIST OF TABLES.....	XIV
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	XVI
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 GENERAL	1
1.1.1 Climate Change Definition	1
1.1.2 Effects Due to Climate Change.....	1
1.1.3 Climate Change Impacts on Natural Disasters.....	2
1.1.4 Climate Change Impacts on Flooding	2
1.2 FLOOD CHARACTERISTICS OF SRI LANKA AND KELANI RIVER BASIN.....	3
1.3 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ON FLOODING IN SRI LANKA	3
1.4 IMPORTANCE OF PROPOSED STUDY.....	4
1.5 PROBLEM STATEMENT	4
1.6 OVERALL OBJECTIVE	5
1.7 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES.....	5
1.8 SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY	5
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	6
2.1 CLIMATE CHANGE STUDIES	6
2.1.1 Climate Change Impacts on South Asia.....	6
2.1.2 Climate Change Effects on Sri Lanka	6
2.1.3 Climate Change Effect on Kelani River Basin.....	8
2.2 MODEL STUDIES REGARDING KELANI RIVER BASIN.....	10
2.2.1 Hydrological Modelling of Kelani River	10
2.2.2 Flood Modelling of Kelani River	10
2.2.3 Climate Change Projection for Rainfall in Kelani River Basin.....	12
2.3 STUDIES ON OTHER RIVER BASINS OF SRI LANKA	13
2.4 RAINFALL TREND IN SRI LANKA	15
2.5 OBJECTIVE FUNCTIONS FOR MODEL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION.....	16
2.5.1 Objective Functions	16
2.5.2 Selection of Objective Functions	17
3 METHODOLOGY	18
3.1 STUDY AREA.....	18

3.2	METHODOLOGY DEVELOPMENT	19
3.2.1	Hydrological Modelling.....	20
3.2.2	Flood Modelling.....	27
3.3	METHODOLOGY FLOW CHART	31
4	DATA CHECKING AND ANALYSIS	33
4.1	DATA COLLECTION	33
4.2	DATA AND DATA CHECKING.....	34
4.2.1	Topographical Data.....	34
4.2.2	Meteorological Data.....	38
4.2.3	Hydrological Data	50
4.3	DATA PROCESSING.....	56
4.3.1	Design Rainfall Developed by the Alternative Block Method.....	56
5	MODEL DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICATIONS.....	59
5.1	HYDROLOGICAL MODEL DEVELOPMENT BY HEC HMS	59
5.1.1	Parameter Estimation	59
5.1.2	Hydrological Model Parameter Sensitivity Analysis	63
5.1.3	Hydrological Model Calibration	67
5.1.4	Model Validation	69
5.1.5	Hydrological Model Simulation for Statistical Rain Event.....	72
5.1.6	Hydrological Model Simulations Considering Climate Change Projections	78
5.2	FLOOD MODEL DEVELOPMENT	82
5.2.1	HEC-RAS Model	83
5.2.2	Parameter Sensitivity Analysis by HEC RAS	84
5.2.3	Model Calibration	87
5.2.4	Model Validation	87
5.2.5	Flood Model Simulation for Statistical Rain Event and Climate Change Projections	88
6	RESULTS.....	91
6.1	HYDROLOGICAL MODEL RESULTS	91
6.1.1	Hydrological Model Parameter Sensitivity Analysis Results.....	91
6.1.2	Hydrological Model Calibration and Validation Results	102
6.1.3	Hydrological Model Simulation for Statistical Rain Event and Climate Change Projections Results.....	105
6.2	FLOOD MODEL RESULTS.....	106
6.2.1	Flood Model Parameter Sensitivity Analysis Results	106
6.2.2	Flood Model Calibration and Validation Results.....	109
6.2.3	Flood Model Simulation for Statistical Rain Event and Climate Change Projections Results ..	115
7	DISCUSSION.....	118
7.1	DATA COLLECTION	118
7.2	MODELLING TOOLS SELECTION	119

7.3	MODELS PARAMETER SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS.....	120
7.4	MODELS CALIBRATION AND VALIDATION	121
7.5	HYDROLOGICAL AND FLOOD MODELS OUTPUTS FOR DESIGN RAINFALL EVENT SIMULATIONS CONSIDERING CLIMATE CHANGE PROJECTION	122
8	CONCLUSIONS	123
9	RECOMMENDATIONS.....	124
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	125

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 3-1:STUDY AREA.....	19
FIGURE 3-2:KELANI BASIN ELEVATION MAP WITH RAIN GAUGES, RIVER GAUGES AND SUB-BASINS	22
FIGURE 3-3: METHODOLOGY FLOWCHART	32
FIGURE 4-1:DIGITAL ELEVATION MODEL (DEM) OF 2M RESOLUTION	35
FIGURE 4-2::SRTM DIGITAL ELEVATION MODEL (DEM) OF 30 M RESOLUTION.....	35
FIGURE 4-3: KELANI RIVER CROSS SECTIONS MEASUREMENT LOCATIONS.....	36
FIGURE 4-4: SAMPLE CROSS SECTION (CS) PROFILE AT 43+325 CHAINAGE	37
FIGURE 4-5: KELANI BASIN LAND USE MAP.....	37
FIGURE 4-6: KELANI BASIN SOIL MAP.....	38
FIGURE 4-7: 2016 MAY HOURLY RAINFALL DATA - COLOMBO STATION	39
FIGURE 4-8: 2016 MAY HOURLY RAINFALL DATA - HANWELLA STATION.....	39
FIGURE 4-9: 2016 MAY HOURLY RAINFALL DATA - GLENCOURSE STATION	40
FIGURE 4-10: 2016 MAY HOURLY RAINFALL DATA - DERANIYAGALA STATION.....	40
FIGURE 4-11: 2016 MAY HOURLY RAINFALL DATA - KITHULGALA STATION	40
FIGURE 4-12: 2016 MAY HOURLY RAINFALL DATA - NORWOOD STATION	41
FIGURE 4-13: 2016 MAY HOURLY RAINFALL DATA - BASIN AVERAGE.....	41
FIGURE 4-14: 2016 MAY EVENT SINGLE MASS CURVE.....	42
FIGURE 4-15: 2016 MAY EVENT DOUBLE MASS CURVE.....	43
FIGURE 4-16: 2017 MAY HOURLY RAINFALL DATA - COLOMBO STATION	43
FIGURE 4-17: 2017 MAY HOURLY RAINFALL DATA - HANWELLA STATION	44
FIGURE 4-18: 2017 MAY HOURLY RAINFALL DATA - GLENCOURSE STATION	44
FIGURE 4-19: 2017 MAY HOURLY RAINFALL DATA - DERANIYAGALA STATION.....	44
FIGURE 4-20: 2017 MAY HOURLY RAINFALL DATA - KITHULGALA STATION	45
FIGURE 4-21: 2017 MAY HOURLY RAINFALL DATA - NORWOOD STATION	45
FIGURE 4-22: 2017 MAY HOURLY RAINFALL DATA - BASIN AVERAGE.....	45
FIGURE 4-23: 2017 MAY HOURLY SINGLE MASS CURVE.....	46
FIGURE 4-24: 2017 MAY HOURLY DOUBLE MASS CURVE	46
FIGURE 4-25: PUBLISHED IDF CURVES FOR COLOMBO STATION.....	47
FIGURE 4-26: PUBLISHED IDF CURVES FOR HANWELLA STATION	48
FIGURE 4-27: PUBLISHED IDF CURVES FOR GLENCOURSE STATION	48
FIGURE 4-28: PUBLISHED IDF CURVES FOR DERANIYAGALA STATION	49
FIGURE 4-29: PUBLISHED IDF CURVES FOR KITHULGALA STATION.....	49
FIGURE 4-30: PUBLISHED IDF CURVES FOR NORWOOD STATION.....	50
FIGURE 4-31: 2016 MAY OBSERVED DISCHARGE DATA	51
FIGURE 4-32: 2017 MAY OBSERVED DISCHARGE DATA	51
FIGURE 4-33: 2016 MAY OBSERVED WATER LEVEL DATA.....	52

FIGURE 4-34: 2017 MAY OBSERVED WATER LEVEL DATA.....	52
FIGURE 4-35: 2016 MAY OBSERVED SEA LEVEL DATA	53
FIGURE 4-36: 2017 MAY OBSERVED SEA LEVEL DATA	53
FIGURE 4-37: PUBLISHED 2016 MAY OBSERVED FLOOD MAP (SOURCE: IRRIGATION DEPARTMENT).....	54
FIGURE 4-38: PUBLISHED 2016 MAY OBSERVED FLOOD MAP (SOURCE: SURVEY DEPARTMENT).....	55
FIGURE 4-39: PUBLISHED 2017 MAY OBSERVED FLOOD MAP (SOURCE: SURVEY DEPARTMENT).....	55
FIGURE 4-40: 50-YEAR 3-DAY DESIGN RAINFALL OF COLOMBO STATION	56
FIGURE 4-41: 50-YEAR 3-DAY DESIGN RAINFALL OF HANWELLA STATION	57
FIGURE 4-42: 50-YEAR 3-DAY DESIGN RAINFALL OF GLENCOURSE STATION.....	57
FIGURE 4-43: 50-YEAR 3-DAY DESIGN RAINFALL OF DERANIYAGALA STATION.....	58
FIGURE 4-44: 50-YEAR 3-DAY DESIGN RAINFALL OF KITHULGALA STATION	58
FIGURE 4-45: 50-YEAR 3-DAY DESIGN RAINFALL OF NORWOOD STATION	58
FIGURE 5-1: 2016 MAY THIESSEN AVERAGED HOURLY RAINFALL DATA - KELANI UPPER BASIN.....	64
FIGURE 5-2: BASIN MODEL OF KELANI UPPER HEC-HMS MODEL USED FOR SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS.....	65
FIGURE 5-3: BASIN MODEL OF KELANI MIDDLE HEC-HMS MODEL USED FOR SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS	66
FIGURE 5-4: 2016 MAY THIESSEN AVERAGED HOURLY RAINFALL DATA FOR KELANI MIDDLE BASIN	67
FIGURE 5-5: 2016 MAY THIESSEN AVERAGED HOURLY RAINFALL DATA FOR KELANI LOWER BASIN.....	68
FIGURE 5-6: BASIN MODELS OF HEC-HMS MODELS (A) KELANI UPPER, (B) KELANI MIDDLE AND (C) KELANI LOWER	68
FIGURE 5-7: 2017 MAY THIESSEN AVERAGED HOURLY RAINFALL DATA FOR KELANI UPPER BASIN	70
FIGURE 5-8: 2017 MAY THIESSEN AVERAGED HOURLY RAINFALL DATA FOR KELANI MIDDLE BASIN	70
FIGURE 5-9: 2017 MAY THIESSEN AVERAGED HOURLY RAINFALL DATA FOR KELANI LOWER BASIN.....	71
FIGURE 5-10: 50-YEAR 3-DAY THIESSEN AVERAGED DESIGN RAINFALL WITH ARF APPLIED FOR KELANI UPPER BASIN	72
FIGURE 5-11: 50-YEAR 3-DAY THIESSEN AVERAGED DESIGN RAINFALL WITH ARF APPLIED FOR KELANI MIDDLE BASIN	73
FIGURE 5-12: 50-YEAR 3-DAY THIESSEN AVERAGED DESIGN RAINFALL WITH ARF APPLIED FOR KELANI LOWER BASIN	73
FIGURE 5-13: COMPARISON OF % CUMULATIVE RAINFALL OF KELANI UPPER MODEL	74
FIGURE 5-14: COMPARISON OF % CUMULATIVE RAINFALL OF KELANI MIDDLE MODEL.....	74
FIGURE 5-15: COMPARISON OF % CUMULATIVE RAINFALL OF KELANI LOWER MODEL.....	75
FIGURE 5-16: COMPARISON OF SUB-BASIN AVERAGE CUMULATIVE RAINFALL WITH DESIGN RAINFALL	75
FIGURE 5-17: COMPARISON OF DESIGN RAINFALL SHIFTING WITH OBSERVED RAINFALL.....	76
FIGURE 5-18: 8 HOURS SHIFTED DESIGN RAINFALL FOR KELANI UPPER	77
FIGURE 5-19: 8 HOURS SHIFTED DESIGN RAINFALL FOR KELANI MIDDLE	77
FIGURE 5-20: 8 HOURS SHIFTED DESIGN RAINFALL FOR KELANI LOWER.....	77
FIGURE 5-21: TEMPERATURE AND RAINFALL PROJECTIONS WITH CLIMATE CHANGE, SOURCE: DORJI ET AL. (2017)	79

FIGURE 5-22: RAINFALL PROJECTIONS WITH CLIMATE CHANGE, SOURCE: CRIP (2019).....	80
FIGURE 5-23: COMPARISON OF 50-YEAR 3-DAY DESIGN RAINFALL FOR CC PROJECTIONS - KELANI UPPER	81
FIGURE 5-24: COMPARISON OF 50-YEAR 3-DAY DESIGN RAINFALL FOR CC PROJECTIONS - KELANI MIDDLE.....	81
FIGURE 5-25: COMPARISON OF 50-YEAR 3-DAY DESIGN RAINFALL FOR CC PROJECTIONS - KELANI LOWER.....	81
FIGURE 5-26: 2D FLOW AREA GRID OF HEC-RAS FLOOD MODEL	83
FIGURE 5-27: DESIGN SEA LEVELS USED FOR DESIGN RAIN EVENT SIMULATIONS AS HEC-RAS MODEL DOWNSTREAM BOUNDARY CONDITIONS.....	89
FIGURE 6-1: COMPARISON OF PEAK DISCHARGE, NASH AND R^2 WITH SCS CURVE NUMBER	92
FIGURE 6-2: OBSERVED DISCHARGES COMPARISON WITH SIMULATED DISCHARGES VARIES WITH SCS CURVE NUMBER.....	92
FIGURE 6-3: COMPARISON OF PEAK DISCHARGE, NASH AND R^2 WITH INITIAL ABSTRACTION	93
FIGURE 6-4: OBSERVED DISCHARGES COMPARISON WITH SIMULATED DISCHARGES VARIES WITH INITIAL ABSTRACTION	94
FIGURE 6-5: COMPARISON OF PEAK DISCHARGE, NASH AND R^2 WITH TIME OF CONCENTRATION (T_c)	95
FIGURE 6-6: OBSERVED DISCHARGES COMPARISON WITH SIMULATED DISCHARGES VARIES WITH TIME OF CONCENTRATION.....	95
FIGURE 6-7: COMPARISON OF PEAK DISCHARGE, NASH AND R^2 WITH STORAGE COEFFICIENT.....	96
FIGURE 6-8: OBSERVED DISCHARGES COMPARISON WITH SIMULATED DISCHARGES VARIES WITH STORAGE COEFFICIENT	97
FIGURE 6-9: COMPARISON OF PEAK DISCHARGE, NASH AND R^2 WITH RECESSION CONSTANT	98
FIGURE 6-10: OBSERVED DISCHARGES COMPARISON WITH SIMULATED DISCHARGES VARIES WITH RECESSION CONSTANT.....	98
FIGURE 6-11: COMPARISON OF PEAK DISCHARGE, NASH AND R^2 WITH RATIO TO PEAK.....	99
FIGURE 6-12:OBSERVED DISCHARGES COMPARISON WITH SIMULATED DISCHARGES VARIES WITH RATIO TO PEAK	99
FIGURE 6-13: COMPARISON OF PEAK DISCHARGE, NASH AND R^2 WITH MUSKINGUM K	100
FIGURE 6-14: OBSERVED DISCHARGES COMPARISON WITH SIMULATED DISCHARGES VARIES WITH MUSKINGUM K	101
FIGURE 6-15: COMPARISON OF PEAK DISCHARGE, NASH AND R^2 WITH MUSKINGUM X	102
FIGURE 6-16: OBSERVED DISCHARGES COMPARISON WITH SIMULATED DISCHARGES VARIES WITH MUSKINGUM X	102
FIGURE 6-17: HEC-HMS RESULTS (GRAPHS) GENERATED BY CALIBRATION AND VALIDATION.....	104
FIGURE 6-18:COMPARISON HEC-HMS RESULTS CONSIDERING CC PROJECTIONS - GENERATED FROM KELANI UPPER SUB-BASIN	105
FIGURE 6-19: COMPARISON HEC-HMS RESULTS CONSIDERING CC PROJECTIONS - GENERATED FROM KELANI MIDDLE SUB-BASIN.....	105
FIGURE 6-20: COMPARISON HEC-HMS RESULTS CONSIDERING CC PROJECTIONS - GENERATED FROM KELANI LOWER SUB-BASIN	106
FIGURE 6-21:OBSERVED AND SIMULATED HANWELLA DISCHARGE COMPARISON VARIES WITH MANNING'S N ..	107

FIGURE 6-22: OBSERVED AND SIMULATED HANWELLA WATER LEVEL COMPARISON VARIES WITH MANNING'S N	108
FIGURE 6-23: OBSERVED AND SIMULATED NAGALAGAMA STREET WATER LEVEL COMPARISON VARIES WITH MANNING'S N	108
FIGURE 6-24: COMPARISON OF OBSERVED AND SIMULATED HANWELLA DISCHARGE OF HEC-RAS CALIBRATION	110
FIGURE 6-25: COMPARISON OF OBSERVED AND SIMULATED HANWELLA WATER LEVEL OF HEC-RAS CALIBRATION	110
FIGURE 6-26: COMPARISON OF OBSERVED AND SIMULATED NAGALAGAMA STREET WATER LEVEL OF HEC-RAS CALIBRATION	111
FIGURE 6-27: SIMULATED FLOOD INUNDATION MAP BY HEC-RAS CALIBRATION	111
FIGURE 6-28: COMPARISON OF OBSERVED (SURVEY DEPARTMENT) AND SIMULATED FLOOD MAPS FOR 2016 MAY EVENT	112
FIGURE 6-29: COMPARISON OF OBSERVED (IRRIGATION DEPARTMENT) AND SIMULATED FLOOD MAPS FOR 2016 MAY EVENT	112
FIGURE 6-30: COMPARISON OF OBSERVED AND SIMULATED HANWELLA DISCHARGE OF HEC-RAS VALIDATION	113
FIGURE 6-31: COMPARISON OF OBSERVED AND SIMULATED HANWELLA WATER LEVEL OF HEC-RAS VALIDATION	113
FIGURE 6-32: COMPARISON OF OBSERVED AND SIMULATED NAGALAGAMA STREET WATER LEVEL OF HEC-RAS VALIDATION	114
FIGURE 6-33: SIMULATED FLOOD INUNDATION MAP BY HEC-RAS VALIDATION	114
FIGURE 6-34: COMPARISON OF OBSERVED (SURVEY DEPARTMENT) AND SIMULATED FLOOD MAPS FOR 2017 MAY EVENT	115
FIGURE 6-35: COMPARISON OF HANWELLA DISCHARGE CONSIDERING CLIMATE CHANGE PROJECTIONS	116
FIGURE 6-36: COMPARISON OF HANWELLA WATER LEVEL CONSIDERING CLIMATE CHANGE PROJECTIONS	116
FIGURE 6-37: COMPARISON OF NAGALAGAMA STREET WATER LEVEL CONSIDERING CLIMATE CHANGE PROJECTIONS	117

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 4-1: DATA SOURCES AND RESOLUTIONS	33
TABLE 4-2: GEOGRAPHICAL COORDINATES OF SELECTED RAIN GAUGE LOCATIONS	39
TABLE 4-3: KELANI BASIN AVERAGE THIESSEN WEIGHTS	41
TABLE 4-4: PUBLISHED IDF EQUATIONS FOR SELECTED RAIN GAUGES	57
TABLE 5-1: HEC-HMS PARAMETERS FOR EACH MODEL ELEMENTS	60
TABLE 5-2: ESTIMATED SCS CURVE NUMBERS FOR EACH SUB-BASINS	60
TABLE 5-3: TIME OF CONCENTRATION (T_c) CALCULATION FOR EACH SUB-BASINS USING TRAVEL TIME METHOD	61
TABLE 5-4: ASSUMED PARAMETERS IN HEC-HMS MODELS	63
TABLE 5-5: PARAMETERS VALUES USED FOR SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS - SUB-BASIN ELEMENT IN HEC-HMS.....	63
TABLE 5-6: PARAMETERS VALUES USED FOR SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS - REACH ELEMENT IN HEC-HMS	64
TABLE 5-7: THIESSEN WEIGHTS FOR RAIN GAUGES OF KELANI UPPER BASIN	64
TABLE 5-8: HEC-HMS MODEL SETUP OF KELANI UPPER FOR PARAMETER SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS	65
TABLE 5-9: HEC-HMS MODEL SETUP OF KELANI MIDDLE FOR PARAMETER SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS	66
TABLE 5-10 : THIESSEN WEIGHTS FOR KELANI MIDDLE AND LOWER BASINS	67
TABLE 5-11:HEC-HMS MODEL SETUPS FOR CALIBRATION	69
TABLE 5-12: HEC-HMS MODEL SETUPS FOR VALIDATION.....	71
TABLE 5-13: AREAL REDUCTION FACTORS APPLIED FOR RAINFALL CORRECTION	72
TABLE 5-14: HEC-HMS MODEL SETUP FOR DESIGN RAINFALL SIMULATIONS.....	78
TABLE 5-15: SELECTED CLIMATE CHANGE PROJECTIONS AND RAINFALL INCREASING FACTORS	80
TABLE 5-16: HEC-HMS MODEL SETUPS FOR DESIGN RAINFALL SIMULATIONS WITH CC PROJECTIONS	82
TABLE 5-17: HEC-RAS FLOOD MODEL GENERAL SETUP	84
TABLE 5-18: ESTIMATED MANNING’S N ROUGHNESS VALUES FOR LAND USE TYPES	85
TABLE 5-19: MANNING'S N VALUES USED FOR FLOOD MODEL PARAMETER SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS.....	86
TABLE 5-20: HEC-RAS FLOOD MODEL SETUP USED FOR PARAMETER SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS.....	86
TABLE 5-21: HEC-RAS FLOOD MODEL SETUP USED FOR CALIBRATION	87
TABLE 5-22: HEC-RAS FLOOD MODEL SETUP USED FOR VALIDATION	88
TABLE 5-23: SEA LEVEL RISING FACTORS FOR SELECTED CLIMATE CHANGE PROJECTIONS	89
TABLE 5-24: HEC-RAS FLOOD MODEL SETUP USED FOR DESIGN RAINFALL SIMULATIONS WITH AND WITHOUT CC PROJECTIONS.....	90
TABLE 6-1: HEC-HMS PARAMETER SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS RESULTS - SCS CURVE NUMBER	92
TABLE 6-2: HEC-HMS PARAMETER SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS RESULTS - INITIAL ABSTRACTION.....	93
TABLE 6-3: HEC-HMS PARAMETER SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS RESULTS - TIME OF CONCENTRATION (T_c).....	94
TABLE 6-4: HEC-HMS PARAMETER SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS RESULTS - STORAGE COEFFICIENT	96
TABLE 6-5: HEC-HMS PARAMETER SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS RESULTS - RECESSION CONSTANT	97
TABLE 6-6: HEC-HMS PARAMETER SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS RESULTS - RATIO TO PEAK	99

TABLE 6-7: HEC-HMS PARAMETER SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS RESULTS - MUSKINGUM K.....	100
TABLE 6-8: HEC-HMS PARAMETER SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS RESULTS - MUSKINGUM X	101
TABLE 6-9: CALIBRATED PARAMETER VALUES OF HEC-HMS MODELS	103
TABLE 6-10: HEC-HMS MODELS PERFORMANCE EVALUATION RESULTS FOR CALIBRATION AND VALIDATION	103
TABLE 6-11: HEC-RAS FLOOD MODEL SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS FOR HANWELLA DISCHARGE.....	106
TABLE 6-12: HEC-RAS FLOOD MODEL SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS FOR HANWELLA WATER LEVELS.....	107
TABLE 6-13: HEC-RAS FLOOD MODEL SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS FOR NAGALAGAMA STREET WATER LEVELS...	108
TABLE 6-14: OPTIMIZED MANNING'S N VALUES FOR LAND USE CATEGORY OF HEC-RAS FLOOD MODEL	109
TABLE 6-15: HEC-RAS FLOOD MODEL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION RESULTS FOR CALIBRATION AND VALIDATION.....	109
TABLE 7-1: DISCHARGES AND WATER LEVELS INCREASING OF CLIMATE CHANGE PROJECTIONS FOR 50-YEAR. RETURN PERIOD	122

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1D	One Dimensional
2D	Two Dimensional
ALOS	Advanced Land Observing Satellite
AMC	Antecedent Moisture Condition
ANN	Artificial Neural Network
ASTER	Advanced Spaceborne Thermal Emission and Reflection Radiometer
BIMSTEC	Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation
CanESM2	Canadian Earth System Model, version 2
CC	Climate Change
CHIRPS	Climate Hazards Group Infrared Precipitation with Station Data
CMIP	Coupled Model Inter-Comparison Project
CN	Curve Number
CO ₂	Carbon Dioxide
CRIP	Climate Resilient Improvement Project
CS	Cross Section
DEM	Digital Elevation Model
DHI	Danish Hydraulic Institute
DIAS	Data Integration and Analysis System
GCM	General Circulation Models
GIS	Geographic information system
HadCM3	Hadley Centre Coupled Model version 3
HEC	Hydrological Engineering Center
HMS	Hydrological Modelling System
ID	Irrigation Department
IDF	Intensity Duration Frequency
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
iRIC	International River Interface Cooperative
ITCZ	Intertropical Convergence Zone
LiDAR	Light Detection and Ranging
MCM	Million Cubic Meters
MSL	Mean Sea Level
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NEX-GDDP	NASA Earth Exchange Global Daily Downscaled Climate Projections
NSE	Nash-Sutcliffe model efficiency
PALSAR	Phased Array type L-band Synthetic Aperture Radar
PPM	Parts Per Million
R ²	Coefficient of Determination
RAS	River Analysis System
RCM	Regional Climate Model
RCP	Representative Concentration Pathway
RF	Rainfall
RRI	Rainfall-Runoff-Inundation
SCS	Soil Conservation Service
SD	Survey Department

SDSM	Statistical Downscaling Model
SDSM	Statistical Downscaling Model
SHER	Similar Hydrologic Element Response
SPI	Standard Precipitation Index
SRTM	Shuttle Radar Topography Mission
UH	Unit Hydrograph
UK	United Kingdom
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WEB-RRI	Water Energy Budget-based Rainfall-Runoff-Inundation model
WL	Water Level
WRF	Weather Research and Forecasting
Yr.	Year