



1 **Growth in mid-monsoon dry phases over Indian region:**
2 **Prevailing influence of anthropogenic aerosols**

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10 **Abstract**

11 A detailed investigation on the potentially drought prone regions over India has been
12 presented in this study based on the balance between precipitation and potential
13 evapotranspiration (PET) during the South West Asian mid-monsoon season. We
14 introduce a parameter named dry day frequency (DDF) which is found suitable
15 to present the drought index (DI) in mid-monsoon season hence strongly associated with the
16 possibility of drought occurrences. The present study investigates the probable aspects which
17 influence the DDF over these regions revealing that the abundance of anthropogenic aerosols
18 especially over urbanized location have prevailing role on the growth of DDF during last few
19 decades. The prominent increasing trend in DDF over Lucknow (26.84° N, 80.94° E), a
20 densely populated urban location situated in the Indo-Gangetic plain, strongly reflects the
21 dominant association of man-made aerosols with the increasing dry phase occurrences.
22 Increase in DDF (~90%) during the last 60 years is observed over this urban area compared
23 to a broader region in its surroundings. In addition, periodic impacts of synoptic scale
24 phenomena like ENSO (El Niño–Southern Oscillation) or SSN (Sun spot number) become
25 weaker when the study location is downscaled towards an urbanized region. However, there
26 still remains some unclear role of air-mass transport on DDF over the potential drought prone
27 region of north-west India. Finally, when long term projections of DDF are drawn using the
28 high urbanization scenario of RCP 8.5 a huge rise in dry days are seen during mid-July to
29 mid-September (reaching up to 50 dry days by the year 2100 over Lucknow) which will be a
30 very crucial concern for policy makers in future.

31



32 1. Introduction

33 Drought is a natural and recurrent phenomenon which occurs in all forms of climate.
34 Although similar to aridity in many ways, droughts are mainly temporary in nature thus it
35 should not be confused with the water scarcity due to excess of water demand over available
36 supply. On the other hand these weather extremes are more reasonably linked with the
37 distribution and frequency of rainfall over any region. Although, there are no generally
38 accepted definitions for drought (Wilhite and Glantz, 1985), the American Meteorological
39 Society has categorized it into four types namely: meteorological or climatological,
40 agricultural, hydrological and socioeconomic (Heim, 2002). A prolonged drought lasts
41 several months or even years while the absence or reduction of precipitation creates
42 meteorological droughts. On the other hand, short-term (few weeks) dryness in surface layer
43 could results an agricultural drought (Heim, 2002). However, when prolonged meteorological
44 droughts reduce the ground water level severely then hydrological droughts occur. Finally, all
45 first three droughts with a deficit in water availability are named as socioeconomic drought.
46 Among these four, the agricultural drought might be a serious issue when the farming or crop
47 producing in humid or sub humid zones are concerned. The situation has however become
48 more serious in the present due to rapid population growth across all continents, thereby also
49 producing a hike in their global demand (Sakumar, 2011). However, India is a country where
50 agriculture and its allied activities act as major source of livelihood and hence it is expected
51 to be deeply affected by drought occurrences especially if it occurs in the mid-monsoon
52 period (as it experiences ~80% of the annual rainfall due to the southwest monsoon).

53 Generally drought events originate from the deficiency in precipitation, and water
54 shortage over a particular region and time (Wilhite and Glantz 1985). As rainfall observation
55 data is available from past two centuries, mostly all the calculations of drought indices
56 includes this ~~is~~ able either single headedly or in combination with other meteorological
57 parameters (WMO, 1975; Tannehill, 1947). The early drought index were simply
58 represented the drought duration or intensity upon satisfying the drought defining criteria,
59 e.g. Munger (1916) defined the drought index as the length of period without 24 hours
60 precipitation with a minimum of 1.27 mm. Similarly, Kincer (1919) used 30 or more
61 consecutive days with less than 6.35 mm daily rainfall for the process of drought
62 identification. Marcovitch (1930) used temperature data along with the precipitation while
63 Blumenstock (1942) used the length of drought in days, where the count was terminated upon
64 occurrence of 2.54 mm of rainfall over a span of 48 hours. Likewise, many other drought



65 index can be found in the past literature where precipitation has been used as a primary factor
66 (Bates, 1935; Palmer, 1965, 1968; Gibbs and Maher, 1967; Frere and Popov, 1979; Bhalme
67 and Mooley, 1980; Petrasovits, 1990; Rao et al., 1981; Heddinghaus, 1991; Tate et al., 2000;
68 Lloyd-Hughes and Saunders, 2002). Recently, the multi-scaler drought index like
69 Standardized Precipitation Index (McKee et al., 1993) is widely used by several researchers
70 in analysing the drought characteristics. However, no single index has the ability to precisely
71 represent the drought duration and intensity and its possible impacts (Wilhite and Glantz,
72 1985). Again, apart from the rainfall, there are also some other parameters that affects the
73 drought severity, e.g. potential evapotranspiration (PET) and soil water holding capacity (Dai
74 et al., 2004). The Palmer Drought Severity Index (Palmer, 1965) is an effective parameter
75 which uses all these three parameters; however, it has some limitations when applying over
76 climatic zones like India (Niranjan et al., 2013). **In addition, gathering all these parameters in
77 gridded form and then quantifying the drought index will be very difficult over the Indian
78 region.** On the other hand, the standardized precipitation–evapotranspiration index (SPEI)
79 uses only precipitation and temperature, and is considered to be better for analysing drought
80 occurrence (Begueria et al., 2010; Vicente-Serrano et al., 2010a, 2010b; Das et al., 2016).

81 India happens to be one of the most vulnerable drought-prone countries, as severe
82 droughts occur at least once in a three year time span since the past few decades (Mishra and
83 Singh, 2010). In addition, there are numerous instances of severe drought conditions during
84 Monsoon as reported in recent past (Pai and Sreejith, 2010). Consequently, several studies
85 have been carried out in the recent years in order to understand the drought occurrences
86 during the Indian summer monsoon period (Ramdas, 1950; Banerji and Chabra, 1964;
87 Chowdhury et al., 1989; Appa Rao, 1991; Gore and Sinha Ray, 2002). Bhalme and Mooley
88 (1980) defined the Drought Area Index for drought intensity assessment using monthly
89 rainfall distribution. Raman and Rao (1981) suggested a possible relation between summer
90 droughts and prolonged brake phase of southwest monsoon over the Indian sub-continent.
91 Parthasarathy et al. (1987) identified the extreme drought years by analysing the decade long
92 anomalies in the Indian summer monsoon rainfall. Tyalagadi et al. (2015) analysed more than
93 100 years of rainfall and identified 21 drought years, half of which were associated with El
94 Niño. Gadgil et al. (2003) explained the excess rainfall or drought in terms of Equatorial
95 Indian Ocean Oscillation (EQUINOO) during 1972 – 2002, especially during monsoon
96 season. Francis and Gadgil (2010) also suggested the role of El Niño Southern Oscillation
97 (ENSO) and EQUINOO behind the 48% deficit of June rainfall over India, although there are
98 contradictions behind this theory (Neena et al., 2011). Apart from these oscillations like



99 ENSO or IOD (Indian Ocean Dipole) there are also lots of other parameters which may have
100 prominent influences on drought occurrence, e.g. Himalayan ice cover, Eurasian snow cover,
101 the passage of intra-seasonal waves, effects of accumulated pollution etc., e.g. Krishnamurti
102 et al. (2010) reported the intrusion of desert air mass to be responsible towards the drought
103 occurrences over the central Indian region.

104 In general, most of the previous studies on monsoon droughts are discussed on the basis
105 of rainfall accumulation, and there are very few, which quantify its relation with the direct or
106 indirect radiative effects of aerosols (Atwater, 1970; Ensor et al., 1971; Twomey, 1977;
107 Albrecht, 1989; Charlson et al., 1992) while considering both rainfall and PET. Absorbing
108 aerosols such as black carbon (BC) or dust have the capabilities of atmospheric heating by
109 absorbing solar radiation, while non-absorbing aerosols (e.g. sulphates) scatter the solar
110 radiation have less effect over the same (Lau and Kim, 2006). Additionally, they have the
111 capability of modulating the cloud characteristics by altering cloud radiative properties (Li et
112 al., 2010; Gu et al., 2012; Dipu et al., 2013; Wencai et al., 2015). Previous studies have
113 shown the presence of the aerosols (mainly dust and BC), and their ability to impact the
114 rainfall (depending upon their sizes) during Indian summer monsoon as described by elevated
115 heat pump hypothesis (Lau and Kim, 2006; Manoj et al., 2011; Vinoj et al., 2014; Das et al.,
116 2015; Solmon et al., 2015). During late pre-monsoon or early monsoon season, the aerosol
117 loading over India is nearly three times higher than the average due to the dust abundance,
118 which is partly dependent upon the winds, precipitation and surface temperature (Dey, 2004;
119 Grini and Zender, 2004; Dey and Girolamo, 2010; Wang et al., 2015; Parajuli et al., 2016).
120 However, the vice versa can also be true (e.g. Moorthy et al., 2007; Lau and Kim, 2006).
121 Very recently some new attempts were also undertaken to study the long and short term
122 implications of both natural and anthropogenic components in producing a hindrance to
123 convective rainfall especially over urbanized coastal locations which may also lead to
124 subsequent drought occurrences (Chakraborty et al., 2016, 2017a, 2017b, Guha et al., 2017
125 and Talukdar et al., 2018). Keeping all these assertions in mind, the present study has put an
126 effort in establishing a possible relationship between aerosol loading and summer monsoon
127 rainfall, consequently, over drought occurrences during this period in past few decades.

128 Hence a detailed investigation is presented to study the evolution of dry phase leading to
129 drought conditions during mid-monsoon over three Indian regions based on the balance
130 between precipitation and PET during the monsoon season. Next, a new parameter called dry
131 day frequency is used to understand the trends of drought potential over the mentioned Indian
132 regions. This is followed by a three pronged investigation to identify the most dominant



133 factor behind these trends after which future projections of DDF is observed and explained
134 for these locations during the mid-monsoon period.

135

136 2. Dataset and methodology

137 Most of the research attempts in recent past have employed SPEI  an indicator of drought
138 occurrence over the Indian region (Beguería et al., 2010; Vicente et al., 2010b; Das et al.,
139 2016). SPEI which is precipitation minus PET mainly represents the climatic monthly water
140 budget. Interestingly, this parameter is found to be the most reliable identifier of drought
141 occurrences as it can be expressed in terms of standardized Gaussian variance with zero mean
142 and one standard deviation (Vicente et al., 2010b). Another advantage of using SPEI over any
143 other multi-scalar drought indicators (e.g. SPI) is that it not only includes the effect of the
144 evaporative demand in its calculation, but also  can be calculated for different time scales
145 (Beguería et al., 2010), unlike the PDSI which  relies on a water balance of a particular system.
146 In this study the SPEI is calculated using monthly precipitation and PET from the CRU TS3
147 dataset (<http://badc.erc.ac.uk/data/cru/>), where the PET is calculated considering the monthly
148 mean temperature and the geographical location of the concerned region as per the method
149 suggested by Thornthwaite (1948). Hence, it provides long-term information about the
150 drought conditions over any location with a high spatial resolution of  $\times 0.5^\circ$ at monthly
151 basis. However, the available precipitation (P) data is provided in form of monthly
152 accumulated value, whereas, the PET represents the monthly mean. Therefore, the difference
153 (D) or SPEI is calculated for each month as follows:

$$D = P - (PET \times \text{number of days in a month}) \quad (1)$$

154 It may be noted that for this analysis, this value of D is normalized with respect to the
155 climatic mean and 1 sigma standard deviation to obtain comparable values for all regions of
156 the country. These normalized values of D are hereafter referred to as DI. This study
157 considered the length of the dry phase as an indicator of drought occurrence and severity,
158 which is calculated from $0.25^\circ \times 0.25^\circ$ daily gridded rainfall datasets as in the National Data
159 Center, India Meteorological Department (IMD) (Guhathakurta and Rajeevan 2008; Rajeevan
160 et al., 2006, 2008) during the period of 1901-2015. Owing to its better temporal and spatial
161 resolution, the IMD rainfall dataset has been used in several research attempts in the recent
162 past for analysing the morphology of drought occurrences over India (e.g. Sinha Ray and
163 Shewale, 2001; Gore and Sinha Ray, 2002). In previous literatures there have been various



164 mentions for identifying certain days as dry, based on some predefined daily rainfall
165 accumulation thresholds. Singh et al. (2009) has mentioned that days having rainfall less than
166 5mm/day can be considered as dry. But this criterion is only valid for ecological droughts and
167 hence it will not be a suitable threshold for many Indian regions experiencing very low
168 rainfall. Recently, another classification scheme has also been attempted by Said et al.,
169 (2014) where rainfall accumulation lower than 1 or 3 mm/day is considered as a dry day. So,
170 to further check which threshold provides best results, the correlation coefficient of DI verses
171 DF are plotted in **Table 2**. The correlation coefficients follow some spatial diversity but
172 interestingly, they do not exhibit much change with respect to the rainfall threshold. Hence,
173 to understand its implication, the number of days having rainfall accumulation above 1 and 3
174 mm (during JJAS) is expressed in the form of ratio in **Figure 1**. The ratio indicates that for
175 all the months and regions, days having rainfall accumulation above 1 mm/day are more in
176 number compared to the days having rainfall accumulation above 3 mm/day. This makes it
177 reasonable to put 1 mm/day as threshold rainfall accumulation for DDF consideration as it
 will filter out only the intensely dry conditions which will **make the drought identification**
179 **more reliable. Hence, this study is progressed using 1mm/day as the dry day identification**
180 threshold. Further, the DI values obtained are normalized with respect to mean and standard
181 deviation for simplicity. Data sets of number of dry days and drought index are passed into
182 three dependence tests: first, using three equal sized grouped box whisker distributions;
183 second by principle component analysis of variances of two main contributors. The third and
184 final approach involves a multi-linear regression in order to see the net contribution of the
185 various components on dry or wet condition,

 Datasets of **sunspot numbers are considered here as a reliable representative of solar**
187 **activity, which in turn may modulate the earth's hydrological balance; hence utilized in the**
188 current study. Monthly averaged sun spot numbers are obtained from the Solar Influences
189 Data analysis Center (SIDC) in the Royal Observatory of Belgium from the year 1749 till
190 present (Cliver et al., 2013). This study also considered ENSO index, obtained from the
191 Oceanic Niño Index (ONI), which is calculated using 3 month running mean of Extended
192 Reconstructed Sea Surface Temperature, Version 5 (ERSST.v5) SST anomalies in Niño 3.4
193 region ($5^{\circ}\text{N} - 5^{\circ}\text{S}$, $120^{\circ} - 170^{\circ}\text{W}$) with a 30-year base period (Huang et al., 2017). Conditions
194 resulting in values beyond the threshold of $\pm 0.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ are considered to be either an El Niño or
195 La Niña. These datasets are obtained from 1950 to present. Present study also uses
196 $0.5^{\circ} \times 0.625^{\circ}$ gridded datasets of AOT at 550 nm, Black Carbon (BC), dust (pm2.5 only),



197 Organic Carbon (OC), sea salt and sulphate obtained from MERRA-2 (Modern-Era
198 Retrospective analysis for Research and Applications version 2) provided by NASA.
199 MERRA-2 provides global reanalysis product since 1980 to present
200 (<https://gmao.gsfc.nasa.gov/reanalysis/MERRA-2/>). Reliability of all the aerosol products
201 from MERRA-2 can be found in Buchard et al. (2017) and Randles et al. (2017). Out of all
202 the aerosol components mentioned, only black carbon concentration datasets are found
203 available for validation against Aethelometer measurements over Kolkata. However, to
204 preserve the parity with monthly averaged Black Carbon Extinction as in MERRA2, the
205 observation datasets are also monthly averaged for a net period of 36 months during 2013,
206 2015 and 2017. Consequently, a well matching is observed between the two sources as shown
207 in **Figure S1**. To be double sure, the datasets of BC AOT and concentrations are both
208 normalized and then their probability distributions are plotted. The distributions fitted with
209 Gaussian curves shows almost similar behaviour in both the cases, which shows the
210 suitability of this datasets in subsequent sections.

211 In addition, the ERA Interim reanalysis cloud cover data is utilized
212 (<http://www.ecmwf.int/>) at $0.75^{\circ} \times 0.75^{\circ}$ default resolution (Beriford et al., 2011). As DDF is
213 being observed mostly over the month of August, hence monthly averaged data of total, high,
214 medium and low cloud covers are extracted over the required regions and are plotted for the
215 same time period (as in for aerosol parameters) during 1980-2015. The idea behind using this
216 dataset was to identify the association between increased cloudiness and reduced rain
217 accumulation during the mid-monsoon months. Additionally, in order to show its relation
218 with cloud microphysics, dataset of cloud particle radius are utilized, and is obtained from
219 NASA Earth Observation (NEO) portal
220 (https://neo.sci.gsfc.nasa.gov/view.php?datasetId=MODAL2_M_CLD_RD). The dataset
221 provided by Terra/ Aqua Satellite of MODIS on daily, weekly or monthly basis with a good
222 spatial resolution of $1^{\circ} \times 1^{\circ}$, and is available only over a relatively shorter span of 2000 –
223 2018. The monthly averaged values of CER have been utilized during the month of July and
224 August for the present study.

225 This study uses gridded population density (as a proxy of urbanization), obtained from
226 Gridded Population of the World (GPWv4), and provided by the CIESIN-SEDAC database
227 from Columbia University for the year 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2015. This data set is
228 constructed by extrapolating the population data from national or sub-national administrative
229 units all around the world. The resolution of the product is 30 arc-seconds, or approximately



230 1 km at the equator, further details about the data can be obtained from
231 <http://sedac.ciesin.columbia.edu/data/set/gpw-v4-population-count-rev10>.

232

233 3. Results and Discussion

234 3.1. Identification of potentially drought prone regions over India

235 Considerable conditions for drought occurrences are identified on the basis of the
236 balance between monthly PET and rainfall accumulation during June-September as depicted
237 in **Figure 2**. It is seen that due to arid climates, north western India experiences higher values
238 of PET particularly up to July which may happen due to late arrival of monsoons at that
239 location and hence this region may be considered for the analysis. On the other hand the
240 south eastern peninsula of India experiences higher PET values, hence it has been considered
241 for further analysis. However, the rest of the country experiences much lesser values of PET.
242 In contrast, precipitation values are consistently lesser both in the north western India as well
243 as the south eastern peninsula, so both these regions may face more probability to experience
244 negative DI, hence are selected for analysis. Another highlight from the figure is that, the
245 mid-section of IGP depicts a sharp gradient of precipitation. This diversity becomes more
246 prominent during the months of July-August as during this period, the entire IGP experiences
247 very heavy rain accumulation (>300 mm on average) but the mid-IGP experiences much
248 lesser rainfall ~200 mm. Consequently, this mid IGP region is also selected for analysis.
249 Accordingly, the grid points with 0.5 degree resolution in these three regions are identified
250 and accumulated to form three main study regions which are numbered 1, 2 and 3
251 corresponding to IGP, South Eastern peninsula and North West India, respectively as shown
252 in **Figure S2**.

253 3.2. Importance of dry day frequency (DDF) in analysing the drought conditions

254 After the identification of the drought prone regions, the main objective is to
255 determine a suitable parameter which best represents the probability of droughts and which
256 also can be related to other natural and anthropogenic factors in all regions. Hence an
257 assumption is taken, that if the temporal distribution of rainfall is considered constant month
258 wide, then a drought is only possible when both PET is high and precipitation is low. Now
259 low precipitation and high PET mainly arises from multiple dry day occurrences in a month
260 leading to droughts. So, for simplicity, during each of four months in three seasons, the
261 difference between precipitation and PET is calculated over 115 years and the obtained data



262 is normalized with respect to mean and 1 sigma std for simplicity, Next, the DDF time series
263 is calculated from daily precipitation values as already described previously after which the
264 correlation coefficients between drought index DI and this dry days frequency are calculated
265 and shown in **Figure 3**. The correlation analysis is done for two overlapping periods of 115
266 and 60 years namely: 1901-2015 and 1956-2015. The reason for this two part analysis is that
267 during the second part, more technological advancement may lead to more reliable daily
268 rainfall data, this is because during recent years the advent of more accurate rain gauges have
269 led more reliability in deciding whether daily accumulation < 1mm and thus more reliable
270 dry day frequencies are calculated. Another reason is that, second part witnessed more station
271 and satellite data sources, so possibility of relationship is expected to be stronger in last 60
272 years. However, to bear better evidence to the above stated hypothesis **Figure S3** shows
273 scatter plots of DI and dry day frequencies for all regions and months.

274 The correlation values for region 1 and 3 during both 115 and last 60 year span are
275 depicted in Figure 3. Reasonable correlation coefficients are obtained in both regions 1 and 3
276 over 115 years. Importantly, better correlation values are observed typically over July in
277 region 3 and August in region 1 while it is lesser in all other cases. This is because, regions
278 situated in the western and north western parts of the country (mainly region 3) generally
279 experiences delayed monsoon as supported from many independent sources which may lead
280 to correlations in June and July in region 1 and 3, region 1 specially shows good correlation
281 in August which is mid monsoon month which need more attention in coming sections.

282 Considering the last 60 years, correlation coefficients improve in all regions and
283 months as expected. Region 3 shows high correlations in July followed by August, while
284 region 1 depicts comparatively much higher values during July and August. Thus the
285 consideration of delayed monsoon onset may bring out more dry days in region 1 and 3. But
286 on the other hand region 1 shows a high association between DI and dry days in August
287 which needs to be studied. Region 2 is mainly influenced by precipitation occurring during
288 the late monsoon months i.e. September and not by the mature monsoon stage which is
289 evident from the higher correlation values at that time. Hence this region may not fit with the
290 scope of the present study. Additionally, as more significant correlation values are obtained
291 during 60 years span compared to 115 year scale, hence DDF trends will be studied over the
292 last 60 years span in the coming sections.

293



294 3.3 Determining the time spans for the analysis of DDF trend over mentioned regions

295 3.3.1. The importance of partitioning Region 1 for further analysis



297 It can be seen from the preceding sections that the correlation between DI and dry
298 days for region 1 is noticeable but it is not highly prominent due to the presence of many
299 outliers in the scatter plots (Figure S3). This is because region 1 encompasses a total spatial
300 coverage of $5^{\circ}\times 8^{\circ}$ which has a lot of topographical and climatic diversities between them. A
301 better example of this has already been depicted from the precipitation diversity in Figure 2
302 where the precipitation gradient was found to change abruptly even within region 1. So these
303 spatial diversities can interrupt the association between droughts and dry days. Hence to have
304 more realistic investigation, the region is now partitioned horizontally along 81.25°E which
305 lies in the middle of IGP. This gives rise to two different regions in the east and west of
306 region 1 which will hereafter be referred as region 1a and 1b, respectively. Next the total
307 distribution of data of DDF for 1a, 1b, 2 and 3 are again investigated for two overlapping
308 periods 1901-1960 and 1956-2015 for parity in **Figure 4(a)**. Region 2 and 3 show almost no
309 change in the distribution before or after 1955, hence it is not given importance. Region 1b
310 shows slight increase in mean and median but with no prominent change in the distribution
311 while the same thing is very prominent over region 1a. In this case, since the last 60 years the
312 mean and median values changed by more than 4 days which is a very alarming fact. Most
313 importantly, the upper quartiles and whisker have ascended to a maximum value of 30 days,
314 which indicates severe drought occurrences. Thus it can be inferred that region 1a emerges as
315 a prominent drought prone region showing an abrupt rise in DDF especially over the month
of August and hence it will be investigated in detail in the coming sections.

316 3.3.2. Analysing the climatic trends of DDF using a 15 day window

317 It has already been discussed that the drought intensity has significant correlation with
318 DDF On a monthly basis. However, it is also necessary to investigate whether the intra-
319 monthly distribution of rainfall may also have its own impact in modulating the dry day
320 frequencies especially during the mid-monsoon months which experience maximum
321 precipitation variability. Hence, the monsoon months (JJAS) are now divided into 8 equal
322 slots of 15 days each and the 60 year time series for all these regions are obtained. Next the
323 robust-fit trend analysis at 95% confidence level is done to find the mean yearly trends,
324 which is multiplied by 60 years and then normalized with respect to mean to generate a
325 percentage wise change in DDF.



326 The percentage changes are shown in **Figure 4(b)** which depicts an overall increase
327 of DDF for all regions with a few exceptions. Region 2 shows very weak trends (< 5%) all
328 throughout monsoon, however, by the end of September, a reasonable trend of ~20% is seen
329 which may link to dry phase developments in the later months. However, this period falls at
330 the declining phase of monsoon which is beyond the main scope of this study; hence it may
331 be neglected.

332 Region 3 shows quite weak but alternating dry day trends over June followed by the
333 month-long increase in July. This indicates a probable change in the timing of monsoon
334 rainfall over region 3. However, this cannot be firmly confirmed as there is no particular time
335 slot having a prominent trend value (all cases showing trends < 5%). Rainfall in June and
336 early August lead to dry region conditions over July, but the cumulative monthly growth in
337 July is ~10% which is not very strong enough and hence it will be discussed later in the
338 study.

339 Finally, Region 1 shows very strong increasing trends in dry day frequencies with
340 similar pattern over 1a and 1b. Both these sub-regions experience relative wetting at late
341 June, followed by a prolonged dry phase up to September. But the main difference between
342 the two sub-regions is that is that the trends are consistently high all throughout in 1a with as
343 much as 60% and 20% increase over August which also continues onto September; while in
344 region 1b the trend values are comparatively lesser (40% and 5%) during August. Thus, it can
345 be inferred that though a clear increase in DDF is obtained all throughout region 1 during
346 July-September, yet the trends are relatively stronger in region 1a especially during August
347 which demand primary importance throughout the study.

348 **3.4 Analysis on DDF trends over region 1a**

349 **3.4.1. Investigating the probable influence of natural and anthropogenic components on** 350 **DDF for region 1a**

351 In light of the previous sections, the probable influences behind the increasing trends
352 in dry day occurrences are investigated over region 1. Number of natural or anthropogenic
353 factors may be responsible for this phenomenon. While natural factors mainly include the
354 effect of solar activity, ENSO variability or moisture tendencies, the anthropogenic
355 constituents mainly include aerosols which again encompass a lot of organic and inorganic
356 pollutants. Now, to quantify the effect of aerosols, the aerosol extinction coefficient values
357 can be utilized from either satellite observations (MISR) or from dedicated model simulations



358 (MERRA2). Since observational datasets from MISR satellites are very sparse during
359 monsoon season and also the total measurement period is only 16 years, hence MERRA 2
360 datasets are used for further analysis. Keeping the availability of AOD datasets in mind
361 further analysis has to be concentrated on 36 years span between 1980-2015. Owing to the
362 prominence of DDF trends during the month of August, further studies are concentrated on
363 this period only. As already mentioned natural factors like solar activity and ENSO
364 oscillations (hereafter referred as SSN and ENSO) may have some impact on precipitation
365 variability which is also supported from previous attempts taken, hence they are considered.
366 Additionally, moisture content also directly controls precipitation and so their monthly means
367 at 850 hpa (corresponding to maximum moisture content during monsoon) are also utilized
368 from MERRA 2 reanalysis database. To understand the dependence of these factors on DDF,
369 first, the monthly DDF values during August 1980-2015 are arranged in descending order and
370 then the sorted dataset is divided into three equal groups as Short Dry Phase (SDP)
371 corresponding to normal conditions (8-10 days with average of 9), then Medium Dry Phase
372 (MDP) signifying near drought (10-14 days, with average of 12.5 days) and Long Drought
373 Period (LDP) which represents a full drought conditions (14-18 days, average ~ 16) as
374 depicted in **Table 3** and they are also hereafter mentioned as SDP, MDP and LDP. Next, for
375 all these three groups, the distribution of total aerosol extinction (AOT), SSN, ENSO index
376 and SHUM at 850 hpa are shown in the form of box plots in **Figure 5(a)**. **It is seen that as**
377 **DDF increases, the distribution of total aerosols start increasing, as evident from the rise in**
378 **median and upper whisker values.** The variation of SSN is almost random in all cases hence
379 neglected. Additionally, ENSO intensity changes fairly with droughts. The upper whiskers
380 and median rises slightly, but its effect is doused due to a dominant overlapping between the
381 groups which fails to indicate a clear relationship. Specific humidity shows a minor decrease
382 in all groups, though the median and quartiles do not show any prominent change (from 15 to
383 13 g/kg). Hence the importance of this factor cannot be ascertained.

384 As the dry phase length distribution fails to identify the dominant factor behind the
385 rise of dry days in region 1a, hence all these four factors are passed through principal
386 component analysis test (PCA) and the results are shown in **Figure S4(a)**. The analysis
387 produced a set of three orthogonal components out of which pc1 and pc2 account for 50 and
388 25% of variances so we can neglect the contribution of the 3rd component. Next, the
389 corresponding variance scores of these components are plotted in Figure 5 which shows that
390 SSN and humidity have very less variance according to the pc1 axis hence considered as less



391 important, but aerosols and ENSO have comparatively higher values so they should be
392 considered important for further analysis.



394 **Further, multi linear regression analysis is done to see the independent contribution of**
395 **these four parameters to DDF.** All datasets are normalized so as to get uniform variability to
396 enable easy identification of the dominating factors. The MLR concludes that the coefficients
397 for aerosol, SSN, ENSO and SHUM are 0.393, 0.008, 0.161 and -0.207 as shown in **Table 4**,
398 SSN does not show any effect hence finally rejected. ENSO and specific humidity have
399 significant contributions but in opposite manner and also their distribution analysis showed
400 significant overlapping; hence they should not be considered in order to remove ambiguity.
401 Finally aerosols have a coefficient of 0.393 which is much higher than the others as also
402 observed in the PCA test and distribution analysis. Hence one has to consider aerosols as the
403 more dominating factor compared to the other natural components in modulating the dry day
404 occurrences.

404 **3.4.2. Significance of various aerosol components influencing the DDF over region 1a**

405 Total columnar extinction values of 5 aerosol components namely: black carbon (BC),
406 Dust PM_{2.5}, organic carbon (OC), Sea Salt and Sulphates are obtained from MERRA 2. BC
407 and OC mostly comes from anthropogenic sources and significantly contribute in warming up
408 the atmosphere. It has been reported in earlier studies that the presence of BC aerosol in rain
409 cloud may have “burn off” effect on the cloud due to heating [Ackerman et al, 2000, Babu
410 and Moorthy, 2002]. On the other hand aerosols like PM_{2.5} which may have both natural and
411 anthropogenic sources can also influence the cloud life time by increasing cloud droplet
412 number (Zhao et al, 2017; Sato et al, 2018). Thus, the cloud coverage is modulated and
413 precipitation process is affected. Now the change in concentration of these parameters during
414 last 36 years over region 1a has been discussed in the next section.

415 Though it has been discussed in the previous sections that aerosols have a dominating
416 influence over dry day occurrences, however, it is yet to be specified which type of aerosols
417 (natural or anthropogenic, organic or inorganic) are becoming major influencing factor for
418 this phenomenon over region 1a. Hence time series datasets of these five components are
419 again taken for 36 years and are grouped with respect to the corresponding dry day ranges as
420 already explained in previous section. After that the corresponding distributions are plotted in
421 box plots in **Figure 5(b)**. The distribution analysis depicts that the sea salts show some
422 overlapping which reduces the impact on DDF. Sulphates have quite high values all



423 throughout but their medians or distribution does not exhibit any deterministic sequence (first
424 decrease then increase); so they also cannot be used here. Dust AOT values are less but its
425 median shows weak contribution towards drying, but the overlapping in distribution makes
426 the overlap association very weak. But compared to the others BC and OC have shown a
427 better association with DDF along with reasonably increasing tendencies in medians and
428 quartiles. But this phenomenon also hints towards a dominant component of pollution coming
429 from certain highly urbanized sectors of region 1a such as Lucknow, Allahabad (25.43° N,
430 81.84° E) and Varanasi(25.31° N, 82.97° E). Again out of these two, BC has relatively better
431 variation as it has the least overlapping nature so it may be considered the most dominant
432 factor. But still to have better evidence, the PCA and regression analysis are attempted.

433 The PCA analysis results are depicted in **Figure S4(b)** which shows the contribution
434 of pc1 alone is 60% followed by pc2 of 25% to be more prominent hence there may not be a
435 need to study pc3 here. From the scores it is found that sulphate and dust behave similarly in
436 their variances with high pc1 and low pc 2 values, but OC and BC have both high pc1 and
437 pc2 components, so they may be found responsible for the variability in dry day changes.
438 However, sea salt also may have some influence but it is not much clearly understood from
439 the figure.

440 To clarify any remaining misconceptions, the MLR coefficients are computed which
441 gives the values as 0.542, 0.129, 0.263, 0.326 and 0.124 (shown in **Table 5**). It is expectedly
442 obtained that the dust and sulphate have very less contributions so should be neglected. BC,
443 OC and sea salt have higher values, of which OC and sea salt have comparable magnitudes,
444 but, sea salt has much less AOT values with lesser pc1 variance score and also reasonable
445 distribution overlapping, so the effect of OC may be considered better. BC has very high
446 MLR coefficient with high pc1 score and also a clear variability of distributions. Hence, it
447 may be concluded that owing to urbanization, the effect of BC followed by OC has much
448 stronger association with drought intensity and dry day occurrence.

449 **3.5. Analysis of DDF trends over Lucknow**

450 From the previous section, it has surfaced that urbanization may have a dominant
451 association with the increase in DDF during August. To be definite about this, a re-
452 investigation has been done over Lucknow (26.8°N, 80.9°E) which is the state capital of the
453 state Uttar Pradesh, and is a more urbanized point location belongs to region 1a. However the
454 relationship of DDF with SSN, ENSO and SHUM is not shown as Lucknow already falls in



455 region 1a whose synoptic effect would not change within the region. Only, here, the effect of
456 individual aerosol components is also depicted in the distribution analysis as shown in **Figure**
457 **6**. Now, in case of Lucknow the variability in dry day values are much stronger as shown by
458 SDP (4-12 dry days average 9.5) MDP (13-17 days with average 15) and LDP (18-30 days
459 with average at 22 days) mentioned in Table 1. The distribution analysis on total aerosol
460 AOT shows much larger values over Lucknow than in region 1a and also the variability of
461 the median values with the quartiles and whiskers are also far more deterministic here which
462 may have influenced the entire distribution towards more dry conditions. Next, coming to sea
463 salts and sulphates, they have much less values than in region 1a due to its significant
464 distance from the seas. Sulphates show no meaningful variation, hence are rejected
465 straightaway, sea salt values are less but the variation of median and upper whisker shows a
466 prominent increase which may be important. However, the lower quartile is very small and
467 overlapping in all three cases which serve as a setback to its variability. However, Dust does
468 not such variations due a considerable overlapping in it. But on the other hand, BC and OC
469 do not have much overlapping and they also have clear increase in medians and both quartiles
470 thus supporting the more sensitivity of this region towards dry days.

471 **Figure S5** shows the distribution analysis of these components with PCA tests. The
472 analysis reveals the presence of three strong principal components where pc1 is 60% and pc2
473 of 30%; hence pc3 is not considered further. Next, when the variance scores for these
474 parameters are plotted, then all factors show almost similar values of pc1 score, so pc2
475 becomes important. While judging the pc2 scores, we see that BC followed by OC has the
476 best variability in this set hence they may be considered for the dry day variation. To confirm
477 this, multi linear regression is done on the components and the results yield values of 0.864,
478 0.218, 0.556, 0.0106 and 0.155 (Table 3). According to previous results, the contribution of
479 BC and OC is much higher than the others, with BC showing a higher correlation in all cases
480 compared to OC, hence the dependence of dry days can be primarily associated with
481 urbanization. Dust follows this parameters but its dependence is comparatively much smaller
482 than both BC and OC which further supports these findings.

483 **3.6. Comparative analysis on the DDF trend of last 60 years and Cloud properties** 484 **among Region 1, 1a and Lucknow**

485 The preceding sections, have given an idea of how urbanization is influencing the
486 evolution of dry day occurrences. But to understand quantitatively its climatic impact now the
487 averaged DDF of last 60 years are plotted for regions 1, 1a, Lucknow. In order to examine the



488 change in DDF patterns as one downscales from a broad synoptic scale (IGP) to a small
489 localised urban location. **Figure 7** reveals that region 1 has a weak but discernible increase
490 from 5 to 15 days in last 60 years. When robust-fit analysis was performed, it was inferred
491 that the net change in dry day frequencies over region 1 is ~35% with respect to the 60 year
492 average. However, the existence of some periodicities in the data was observed while no
493 evident extremes were observed in the time frame. The value of the slope is found to be less
494 (0.074) which leads to a poor r of 0.384. For region 1a the total variability is from 5 to 18
495 days; so the slope is expected to improve a bit (with a robust-fit net trend of ~44% with
496 respect to the average) while the periodicity seems to be apparently disturbed due to presence
497 of more data extremes. Finally, in case of Lucknow, huge change is observed from 4 to 25
498 days which indicates a complete shift in rain climatology with trend values as high as 61%
499 with respect to 60 year average during August when normally, the maximum rainfall occurs
500 over India. Huge number of outliers and extremes are seen some of which are close to 30
501 days (indicating no rain over August at all). The periodicity also seems to be disturbed due to
502 outliers resulting in a very sharp slope of 0.139 per year. Thus the severity in drought
503 climatology is well explained with respect to urbanization as already hypothesized earlier.
504 But it may be noted that the increasing trends and correlations are mainly caused by more
505 occurrence of high dry days in present rather than a gradual rise in the mean values;
506 additionally there are also some periodicities in the signal which results in the correlation
507 being less than 0.5.

508 It is reported earlier that increase in anthropogenic aerosols may lead to more number
509 of CCN causing reduction in cloud particle radius (**Figure 7**) which may result into less-
510 occurrence of rain in spite of the increase in cloud cover. From previous section it is clear that
511 dry day frequency exhibits a definite increase in magnitude over region 1a and Lucknow.
512 Since anthropogenic components have shown highest possible dominance on dry day
513 occurrences, so an attempt is made to identify how cloud parameters has changed with time
514 over region 1, 1a and Lucknow having different urbanization growth and so on the
515 anthropogenic components. Region 1 which is covering a broad area does not show
516 prominent change in DDF and it is also observed that that the change in cloud cover over
517 region 1 (~ 2%) and reduction in cloud particle size are very feeble. But interestingly as the
518 region of concern is downscaled to Region 1a followed by a further downscaling to a region
519 the urbanization impact becomes prominent and that is also reflected in the observed cloud
520 parameters. It is evident from the figure that there is a decrease in cloud particle size by 6.4%



521 over region 1a only in last 19 years. This has significantly increased the cloud lifetime
522 resulting in a more definite growth of mid and low level clouds. The situation however,
523 becomes more prominently worse in case of Lucknow where cloud particle radius shows a
524 decreasing (12%) trend in last two decades and accordingly cloud cover increased
525 consistently (~18%) reflecting the impact of urbanisation. As a consequence, the dry day
526 frequency ascends at a rapid rate over Lucknow in spite of increasing cloud cover which
527 definitely needs to be studied in more detail in future approaches.

528 The long term trends of dry day occurrences have exhibited a prominent growth in dry
529 days but the effect of this trends were found to be subdued to some extent by several
530 periodicities over the last 60 years in both region 1 and 1a. To understand their role to a
531 quantitative scale, periodicity analysis is done on last 60 years using autocorrelation functions
532 and the results are depicted in **Figure S6**. The ACF values show highest value of 1 for a time
533 lag 0, hence it is removed. Also there is no use in understanding periodicities greater than half
534 of the period hence the maximum period is fixed to 30 years. 1 sigma bars are provided to
535 understand which periodicity may be significant enough to impact the long term trends. The
536 figure shows that the ACFs are reducing with time for all regions just as expected. However,
537 only two points are found considerable, one is at the local maxima of 4 years corresponding
538 to ENSO, where as expected the synoptic influences will be stronger in larger spatial scales.
539 Another periodicity is expected to lie at ~1-2 years which represents the year-year varying
540 component of urbanization. However, this effect is found to be much lesser in region 1 as it
541 has a much higher spatial scale. But in case of region 1a the 1 year periodicity is expected to
542 more prominent than in region 1 which is also supported with the comparatively lesser
543 contribution of ENSO in region 1a as also shown. Again, because of the same reason, the
544 year to year variability (shown by periodicity 1) should be most dominant in Lucknow
545 followed by 1a and then 1. The same thing follows in the figure and interestingly, the effect
546 of urbanization overshadows the other factors like ENSO in the periodicity analysis for
547 Lucknow (due to presence of many outliers) as shown previously. The contribution of both
548 outliers extremes with periodicities are seen almost comparable in region 1a. But in region 1
549 the effect of periodicities is more than the outliers as clearly seen with higher ACF in ENSO
550 for region 1 compared to 1 year periodicity case. This clearly infers about the effect of
551 urbanization which suppresses the effect of ENSO periodicity and thereby results in the
552 drastic increase in DDF over Lucknow.

553



554 **3.7. Analysis of DDF trends over Region 3**

555 **3.7.1. Probable influence of natural and anthropogenic components on DDF for region 3**

556 In most of the preceding sections, the variability of DDF has been studied over
557 Region 1 falling in the IGP. However, the north-western part of the country also comes under
558 high drought severity zone as already discussed; hence this region is studied in detail now.
559 Figure 4 has showed that the DDF trend is comparatively higher during the month of July;
560 hence DDF during that month will be considered hereafter for further analysis over region 3.
561 But it may be noted that the change is not so much prominent here as in region 1 (with a
562 cumulative average of ~8% rise) and also the yearly fluctuations are too large which has
563 subdued the trends resulting a feeble rise of two days in the last 60 years (23-25 days) over
564 this region shown in **Figure 8**. To start with the distribution analysis, three classes are made
565 as SDP (14-20 dry days average 19) MDP (21-24 dry days average 22.6) and LDP (24.5-27.5
566 days with average 26 days) as depicted in Table 2. It may be noted that the values themselves
567 have high magnitudes for all classes and the variability is also quite less (19-26 days) here
568 compared to 9-22 in Lucknow; so the observed variation also should not be much prominent
569 which is also evident from **Figure 8(a)**. Further, as this region generally experiences arid
570 climate, hence specific humidity can be an important factor here. Accordingly a decreasing
571 trend is seen as supported by the median and lower bounds. But there is more overlapping
572 among the classes and the total variance of humidity at 850 hpa is only between 12-10 which
573 may not be strong enough to modulate drought intensities all by itself. SSN shows no definite
574 variation hence not considered further. Aerosols and ENSO seem to have a weak increasing
575 trend in their medians which again is diffused by more overlapping in these distributions. So
576 this weaker variability is in good agreement with the feeble trend in dry days, but
577 simultaneously makes it difficult to determine the potential driving factor behind the
578 increasing DDF in region 3.

579 A better insight into the inter-dependence of all these components are investigated by
580 the PCA test in **Figure S7 (a)**. The analysis reveals four PCA components out of which three
581 PCs are considered to explain the complete range of variances in dry days. The scores signify
582 no definite pattern with the total aerosol AOT assuming high pc1 and low pc2 pc3 while
583 ENSO has high pc2 and pc3 with lesser pc1 and SHUM falls in completely different
584 quadrant. Now since aerosols have higher pc1 component which is comparatively stronger
585 than other pcs so it may be a deciding factor. To clarify this confusion, MLR coefficients are
586 calculated which come around 0.107, 0.078, 0.056 and -0.267 also shown in Table 2. It is



587 clear from the MLR outputs that specific humidity has a strong negative influence on dry
588 days so it will have good effect on drought occurrences. But apart from this, the second
589 dominant factor behind droughts is still found to be the aerosols. However, this fact needs to
590 be supported with more detailed analysis as shown in the later sections.

591 **3.7.2. Analysing the influence of different aerosol components on DDF for region 3**

592 The distribution analysis of aerosol components are now shown in **Figure 8(b)**
593 which depicts that as usual, sea salt aerosols and sulphates have no role in modulating the
594 DDF. But it may be noted that here the magnitude of sea salts and sulphates are higher than
595 in region 1 or 1a may be due to its transport from the nearby seas which has not been washed
596 away by rain in its path owing to the arid climate. However, experience a very prominent
597 overlapping between the components which reduces the overall trend. The variation of OC is
598 not clear and hence is obliterated. BC as usual has a deterministic variance with some
599 overlapping; but still the whiskers and median values indicate its impact on dry days. Another
600 important aspect here is that, the range of values for these parameters are much lesser here
601 due to lesser urbanization which still affects the DDF. But the contribution of dust aerosols
602 emerges as the dominant component here as it not only shows higher values compared to all
603 other regions but it also signifies a clear trend in the medians and distribution values. Thus it
604 can be inferred that both dust and BC may contributed to this phenomena.

605 To investigate which parameter has more dominance in dry days formation, PCA
606 analysis is done on the individual components and the results are depicted in **Figure S7(b)**.
607 Here four PCAs are obtained, but the first two PCAs contribute 80% of variability so the 2D
608 variance is seen. Also the contribution of pc1 is comparable to pc2 so here both will be
609 important. While analysing the scores it is observed that only dust and BC have both high pc1
610 and pc2 so should be considered while most of the others have lower pc2 scores so they can
611 be neglected. Further investigation is done on MLR analysis towards the trend contribution
612 which also gives similar outputs as 0.464, 0.431, 0.120, 0.182, and 0.033 (Table 3). Again
613 here both BC and dust emerge potentially significant for the region 3 to be considered in
614 associated with the slant rise in dry days. Both of these two components may have local
615 sources but owing to its location, there are possibilities of having added amount of dust
616 aerosols being transported from adjoining deserts or from dust storms and fumigation of dust
617 from the ground during intense dryness which are not found prominent over the region 1a
618 (where BC and OC was high due to high urbanization). Further for more meticulous



619 observation we have also examined the cloud particle radius and cloud cover (**Figure 9**)
620 which shows that all four types of cloud cover have remained almost unchanged over the
621 years and there is a weak reduction in CPS (~2%) unlikely to the region 1a (6.4%) or
622 Lucknow (~12%). This is again in good agreement with less prominent increase of
623 anthropogenic emissions or in short less increase in urbanization over region 3 compared to
624 region 1a or Lucknow. This is further discussed in coming sections. But few things are
625 important to mention here: the trend of dry days in region 3 though it is weaker compared to
626 region 1a may have serious impact in future as the region already experiences high number of
627 dry days itself so a slight increasing trend is also alarming. Thus the effect of urbanization
628 will be still an important parameter contributing towards the hike of BC and (some of) dust
629 aerosols growth and in turn leading to more strong trends in DDF over this region.

630 **3.8. Impact of urbanization on DDF trends**

631 From the previous section, a strong association has been obtained between dry day
632 occurrences and urbanization due to high BC and OC or dust. Now to prove whether it is due
633 to urbanization, one needs to study the effect of land use or vegetation cover. But these
634 datasets are either not available in public domain or their reliability is not good enough. On
635 the other hand high population density at a location is generally associated with the growth of
636 urbanization. So, this concept is utilized from gridded 1° population densities during 2000 -
637 2015 from the SEDAC website. The primary distribution of population for year 2000 is
638 shown in **Figure S8** which depicts, more values at region 1a compared to region 1b, and
639 another thing is that, Lucknow is still found as a patch of very high population even at 2000.
640 On the other hand, region 3 had much lesser populations at the same time. Next, the trends of
641 population density are observed over region 1, 1a and Lucknow and the results are depicted
642 in **Figure 10**. It is observed that all throughout region 1, population density rises from 650-
643 800 persons per sq kilometre which quite a high value is. Next, region 1a shows much higher
644 values than 1 with a steep rise of 760-1000 persons per square km. So region 1 has
645 consistently high population average and trend will definitely lead to higher OC and BC. The
646 situation worsens in Lucknow where population changes from 850-1100 persons with most of
647 change happening in last 10 years which strongly supports the amplified effect at Lucknow
648 compared to 1a. But region 3 shows a very less value comparatively from 100-140 leading to
649 less BC OC there, but relative change there is 40% compared to Lucknow (30%) so in future,
650 if urbanization and population persists to grow there in this rate then this constituents of BC



651 and OC with dust will grow to alarming limits which can cause drastic change in DDF over
652 North-Western Indian regions.

653 **3.9. Probable contribution of air mass transport over region 3**

654 From the previous section, it follows that urbanization has considerable impact in
655 increasing the dry phases over region 1a during the mature monsoon phase. But in region 3,
656 relatively the effect of urbanization is feeble as has been reflected through the less population
657 density and BC, OC concentrations. However, the observed increasing trend of dry days in
658 association with the increase in dust aerosols over this region may be partially attributed by
659 the loading of dusts aerosols from local sources and partially transport from the adjoining
660 deserts. To investigate the transport issues the back trajectory analysis has been carried out
661 during second week of July (shows highest trend in dry days over region 3) using HYSPLIT.
662 The frequency of all possible trajectories are drawn in 12 hour steps for the preceding 10 days
663 at 1 degree resolution of GDAS data at 2000 m to understand the probable transport of dust
664 aerosols. The endpoint of the trajectories has been taken fixed at 27.5°N 72°E (pointing to the
665 centre of region 3). Primarily, trajectories are drawn for all available years from 2005 – 2018
666 but observation does not lead to any significant inferences because the trajectories show a
667 wide range of variability. Next, to understand them in more precise manner, an attempt has
668 been done by considering three sets of years having too high number of dry days (2009, 2015
669 having dry days > 23), moderate number of dry days (2010, 2014 DDF~20) and less number
670 of dry days (2011-2012 with DDF<16) with similar population and meteorological pattern.
671 After that, the frequency of back trajectories for each of these 6 years is depicted in **Figure**
672 **S9**. No noteworthy similarity is found observing the trajectories for different set of years
673 indicating any prevailing paths of air mass transport. Though it may be noted that the arid
674 land mass of Afghanistan and Middle East may have some contribution in transported dust
675 aerosols (as the figures show mostly significant air masses path from west and from North
676 West) but it is not enough to confirm any dominant path of air-mass transport in region 3
677 indicating any clue of increased loading of dust aerosols.

678 Further, for more confirmation all the back trajectories available during the June-July
679 are accumulated for 2005-2018. For each of these years the frequency distribution of
680 trajectories is accumulated with respect to hour lag from -1 to -120 hours and grouped into
681 five classes in such a way that the first group consists of all possible trajectory endpoints
682 throughout the last 24 hours before arrival accordingly the second group represented 24 to 48
683 hours before arrival and so on for the five days. The latitude and longitude corresponding to



684 the endpoints for each day trajectories are recorded and parsed into five groups to plot their
685 frequency distributions shown in **Figure 11**. It can be noted that in day 1 the latitude or
686 longitude distribution is confined within a very thin spread which gradually diverges with
687 days. From day 3 the spread maintains a band of longitude span around 60-75 E and Latitude
688 spans from 20-30 N covering most of Pakistan and a portion of Arabian Sea. Further in day 4
689 and 5 the spread of distribution becomes more diverged (Lon-55-75, lat 18-35) covering the
690 Middle Eastern Asia to the north Arabian Sea. Overall, the source points of the transport of
691 air mass are too random and insignificant to attribute in the increase in dry day occurrences.
692 This again suggests that also in region 3 local sources and urbanization influenced DDF but
693 only with a lesser impact compared to region 1a.

694 **3.10. Future trends of DDF over Region 1 and 3 using RCP 8.5 scenario**

695 The next concern of this study is to investigate the projected change of dry phase
696 lengths over the foreseeable future. Many attempts in the recent years have employed CMIP5
697 GCM simulations to provide future projections for any urbanization scenario. In accordance
698 with the present study, RCP 8.5 projections of rainfall (and DDF) corresponding to maximum
699 urbanization levels has been considered over the mentioned regions. It may be noted that in
700 the last sixty years itself, DDF values have reached ~ 30 days in August, hence it is useful to
701 study DDF in a two months span of mid-July to mid-September (having a reasonable
702 increasing trend in dry days). The future projections of DDF over this time span is now
703 obtained from 1950-2100. But the reliability and accuracy of these datasets first need to be
704 validated from in-situ measurements. Hence, historical daily precipitation datasets of r1i1p1
705 realization from 11 well known GCM simulations are taken during 1955-2005 for all grid
706 points in region 1 and 3 after which the DDF is calculated and recorded. Finally the averaged
707 DDFs from each model was compared with the IMD data and the correlation coefficient with
708 the normalized standard deviation values in **Table 6** indicate that three models namely: CAN
709 ESM2, CNRM CM5, NORESM 1M show better agreement; hence they can be utilized to
710 generate future projections for region 1 and 3 up to year 2100. For simplicity the yearly
711 means of DDF historical data from the models are also shown in **Figure S10** which again
712 are found to follow the expected trends of DDF in all three regions

713 Next the total variation in dry days are investigated over region 1 and 3 including both
714 historical and CMIP5 RCP 8.5 projections data to get a 150 year trend of dry day frequencies
715 in **Figure 12**. The DDF for all 29 grid points in region 1 and 20 grid points over region 3 are



716 averaged yearly and then depicted in Figure 7 and 9. The multi model mean data shows that
717 even when averaged spatially, dry days show clear increase from ~ 8 days in 1950 to ~40
718 days near 2100. Thus Region 1 will experience a rise in DDF from 10% to 70% during mid
719 monsoon phase which is highly alarming and is attributed to the rapid pace of urbanization
720 over those regions in the future. Again, this trend looks less discretely increasing compared to
721 the historical trends over Lucknow. Again, in certain cases the projected DDF is expected to
722 increase up to ~50 days (80%) during the 2100 monsoon which should lead to severe drought
723 conditions. Again, the trends look comparatively weaker in first fifty years (8-12), then it gets
724 stronger (12-24) and finally shoots up to very high values (24-42 days) after 2050 which is
725 primarily caused due to high urbanization rate over this region in the future. However, when
726 the same analysis was done for region 3 DDF was found to increase steadily from 20 to 40
727 days over 150 years. The trends of DDF are clearly much weaker in region 3 compared to
728 region 1 while the standard error bars are also less here. Both of this factors can be attributed
729 to the fact that region 3 has much less urbanization components than region 1. But it may be
730 noted that if region 3 continues to face urbanization at the present rate, then in future it will
731 experience more number of dry days. Additionally, it has been observed that, the trends have
732 increased almost steadily in region 3 with no abrupt change in DDF in the last 50 years like
733 region 1. This is attributed to the low urbanization levels at region 3 at present.

734 Hence region 1 creates a more alarming situation with dry days increasing by around
735 5 times compared to the other regions. So to further investigate this abrupt change spatially,
736 the model averaged data of DDF for 50 years span are shown for region 1 in the bottom panel
737 of Figure 12. The figure shows an expected high value around Lucknow for the 50 year
738 periods; but its effect diffuses as one goes towards the outskirts of Lucknow facing lesser
739 urbanization. Another thing is that the places adjoining Lucknow show a very drastic change
740 only after 2010. Thus, most of the places adjoining Lucknow shows very high number of dry
741 days (>45 days) near the end of this century which will grossly affect the monsoonal rainfall
742 leading to severe droughts and so it needs to be addressed by policy makers.

743 4. Conclusions

744 It is an essential aspect to study the probability of drought occurrences over India during
745 monsoon as agricultural and economical issues are directly related with it. Here, a detailed
746 study on the occurrence of dry days during monsoon over the Indian region is presented. The
747 study investigates three potentially drought prone regions in India based on the dearth of
748 precipitation and abundance of PET. Region 1 mostly belongs to the State of Uttar Pradesh



749 (UP), Region 2 covers major parts of the states of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu and small
750 portion of Karnataka while Region 3 encompass the arid part of Rajasthan. A series of
751 investigations are progressed which infer that over the eastern part of region 1 which is
752 referred as region 1a urbanization plays significant role in increasing DDF. Prevailing impact
753 of anthropogenic emission like BC or OC aerosols becomes more prominent as the study
754 goes in depth with a downscaling approach from a broad region 1 to a specific urbanized
755 location like Lucknow which is one of the urbanized sectors of IGP. In association with the
756 increase in aerosols a reduction in cloud particle radius has been observed in our investigation
757 which indicates a reasonable cause of reduced rainfall occurrences and increase in DDF. This
758 also indicates the scope of the study over several other point locations having drought
759 occurrence record but could not be included in the present study approach Finally, the long
760 term projections of DDF are drawn over region 1a and 3 using intense urbanization scenario
761 of RCP 8.5 and an average of 70% rise in dry days are seen which may be a very crucial
762 concern by the year 2100 and hence it needs to be considered by policy makers in future
763 aspects. However, this study is mainly done from modelled components of aerosols, so a far
764 more accurate analysis can later be done over IGP subject to more availability of aerosol in-
765 situ data in the other major urban locations over India. The main findings of the study are
766 shown in a schematic presentation in **Figure 13** and are highlighted as follows:

- 767 ➤ The DDF (based on the frequency of days having local precipitation accumulation
768 less than 1mm) has a significant level of correlation with the universally accepted
769 monthly SPEI Drought Index (DI) especially in the last sixty years. Further, the
770 correlation levels between DI and DDF are more prominent during August in Region 1a
771 and during July in region 3.
- 772 ➤ The trends of DDF (within 15 days window) are more prominent during August for
773 region 1a. However, region 3 shows a descent trend during July while region 2 shows the
774 same during late September, (corresponding to monsoon retreating phase) hence it has
775 been neglected as it may not completely reflect a monsoonal drought.
- 776 ➤ Results from region 1a indicate prevailing contribution of aerosols compared to
777 ENSO, Humidity or SSN. Further studies show that BC and OC aerosols over urbanized
778 region are more active in increasing the DDF, and this is also supported from
779 distribution, PCA and MLR analysis
- 780 ➤ The trend analysis on DDF reveals that the increasing trends become stronger as the
781 spatial coverage is downscaled from region1 to 1a and followed by a local urbanized



782 location of Lucknow. About 50% increase in DDF is found in Lucknow compared to
783 17% all through region 1. Further, a periodicity of 4 and 8 years is found stronger in
784 region 1 which gets overpowered by the random urbanization component over Lucknow.
785 ➤ Population density maps have been taken as a proxy of the urbanization component
786 which depict much higher values (850 persons/km² and trends of ~35%) over Lucknow
787 compared to the rest of region 1 and 1a. Further the population density values are very
788 less in region 3 (100 persons/km²) which is in good agreement with lesser impact of
789 urbanization on DDF over this region.
790 ➤ In depth investigation revealed that urbanization components like BC or OC increase
791 shows significant association with the reduction tendency of cloud particle radius (~12%
792 reduction of CPR) and increased lifetime (~ 18% rise in LCC) over Lucknow which
793 results in a stronger gradient of dry day occurrences (from 9 days in 1956 to ~17 days at
794 present).
795 ➤ Though in region 3 the scarcity of water vapour in its atmosphere plays a major role
796 to experience a high number of dry days (~23) still dust aerosols show an increasing
797 trend and hence it probably influences a further increase in DDF (an increase from 23
798 days in 1956 to 25 days at present) which is alarming for region 3.
799 ➤ The climatic projections of dry day frequency from CMIP5 simulations of 3 GCM
800 model (CNRM CM5, CAN ESM and NOR ESM 1M) show a sharp increase in dry days
801 during July 15 to September 15 with DDF reaching up to 50 dry days over region 1 and
802 45 days over region 3 by 2100.

803

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810

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1044 **Tables**

1045 **Table 1 List of Abbreviations**

Slno	Short Form	Full Form	Slno	Short Form	Full Form
1	PET	Potential EvapoTranspiration	24	CER	Cloud Effective Radius
2	DDF	Dry Day Frequency	25	SDP	Short Dry Phase
3	DI	Drought Index	26	MDP	Medium Dry Phase
4	IGP	Indo-Gangetic Plain	27	LDP	Long Dry Phase
5	RCP	Representative Concentration Pathway	28	SSN	Sun Spot Number
6	WMO	World Meteorological Organization	29	PCT/A	Principle Component Analysis/Test
7	SPEI	Standardized Precipitation Evapotranspiration Index	30	PM	Particulate Matter
8	ENSO	El Niño–Southern Oscillation	31	SHUM	Specific Humidity
9	IOD	Indian Ocean Dipole	32	CMIP	Coupled Model Intercomparison Project
10	BC	Black Carbon	33	AOD	Aerosol Optical Depth
11	PDSI	Palmer Drought Severity Index	34	MISR	Multi-angle Imaging SpectroRadiometer
12	SPI	Standardized Precipitation Index	35	MLR	Multi Linear Regression
13	CRU	Climatic Research Unit	36	BOB	Bay of Bengal
14	P	Precipitation	37	UP	Uttar Pradesh
15	D	Difference of P and PET	38	CCN	Cloud Condensation Nuclei
16	IMD	India Meteorology Department	39	TCC	Total Cloud Cover
17	OC	Organic Carbon	40	HCC	High Cloud Cover
18	AOT	Aerosol Optical Thickness	41	MCC	Medium Cloud Cover
19	MERRA	Modern Era Retrospective-Analysis for Research and Applications	42	LCC	Low Cloud Cover
20	SEDAC	SocioEconomic Data and Applications Centre	43	ACF	Autocorrelation Function
21	ERA	European Re-analysis	44	GCM	General Circulation Model
22	NEO	NASA Earth Observations	45	R1/R1A	Region 1/1a
23	MODIS	Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer	46	M6/7/8/9	Month 6/7/8/9

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Mon	Threshold	r1	r2	r3	avg
6	1	-0.421	-0.266	-0.389	-0.359
6	2	-0.429	-0.292	-0.392	-0.371
6	3	-0.433	-0.298	-0.396	-0.376
7	1	-0.403	-0.376	-0.425	-0.401
7	2	-0.405	-0.39	-0.422	-0.406
7	3	-0.406	-0.397	-0.421	-0.408
8	1	-0.413	-0.407	-0.433	-0.417
8	2	-0.412	-0.411	-0.431	-0.418
8	3	-0.414	-0.411	-0.436	-0.42
9	1	-0.418	-0.411	-0.442	-0.424
9	2	-0.422	-0.417	-0.444	-0.427
9	3	-0.424	-0.419	-0.449	-0.431

1053 **Table 2.** Selection of thresholds for DDF analysis.

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Region	Case 1(SDP)		Case 2(MDP)		Case 3(LDP)	
	Range	Average	Range	Average	Range	Average
Region 1a	8-10	9	10-14	12.5	14-18	16
Lucknow	4-12	9.5	13-17	15	18-30	22
Region 3	14-20	19	21-24	22.6	24.5-27.5	26

1055 **Table 3.** Classification of dry day phase according its length.

Region	Components			
	Aerosol	SSN	ENSO	SHUM
Region 1a	0.393	0.008,	0.161	-0.207
Region 3	0.107	0.078	0.056	-0.267

1056 **Table 4.** MLR coefficients for all general factors.

Region	Components				
	BC	Dust	OC	Sea Salt	Sulphate
Region 1a	0.542	0.129	0.263	0.326	0.124
Lucknow	0.864	0.218	0.556	0.011	0.155
Region 3	0.464	0.431	0.120	0.182	0.033

1057 **Table 5.** MLR coefficients for aerosol components.

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SI No.	Model Name	Correlation	Normalized STD
1	ACCESS 1.3	0.20398	0.417101
2	CAN ESM 2	0.3534	0.291455
3	CMCC CESM	0.27519	0.376355
4	CNRM CM5	0.51646	0.254338
5	CSIRO MK 3	0.02852	0.564645
6	GFDL ESM 2M	-0.01922	0.649957
7	HADGEM2 -CC	-0.23064	0.410529
8	INMCM4	-0.05084	0.558969
9	IPSL CM5 LR	0.27714	0.41382
10	MIROC 5	0.26838	0.362948
11	NOR ESM 1M	0.39618	0.283413

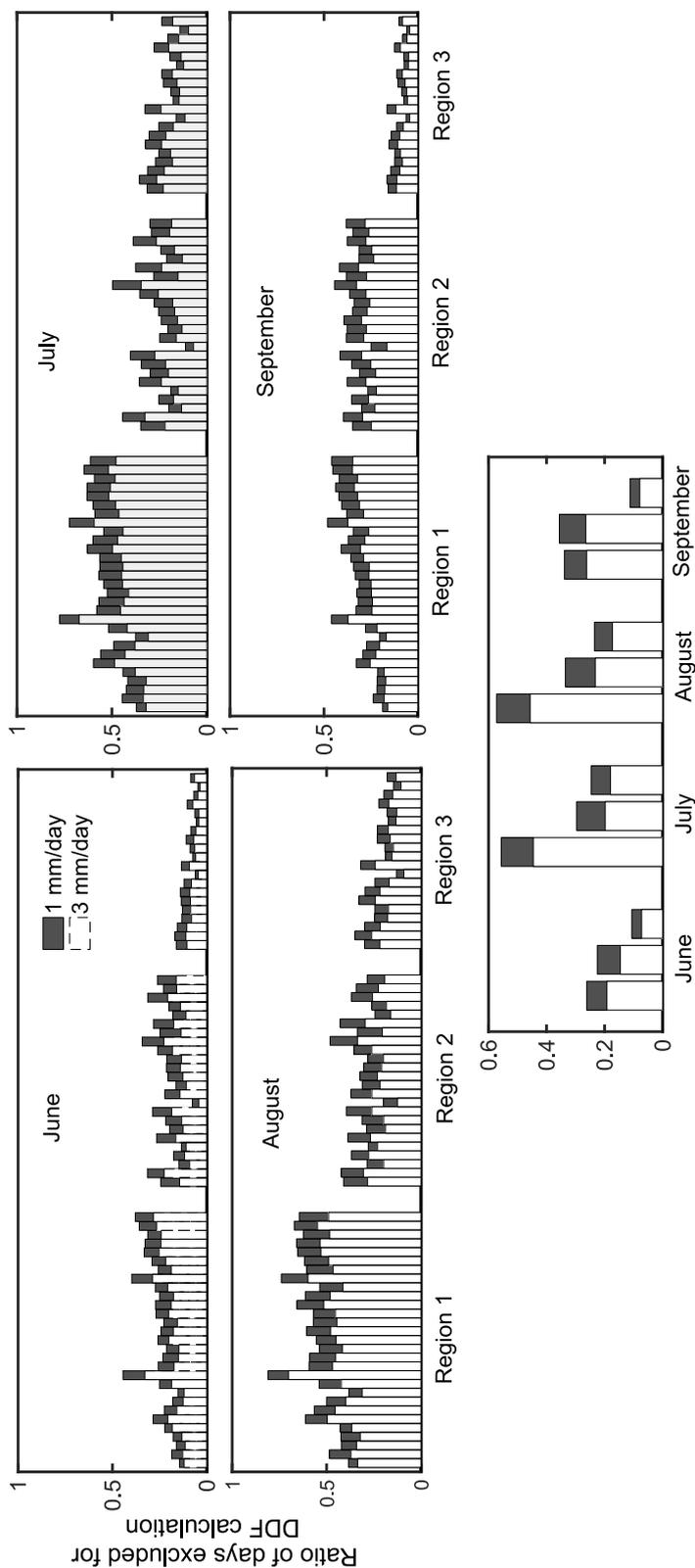
1065 **Table 6. Performance details of all 11 GCMs used.**

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1067 **Figures**

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Figure 1. Estimation of the optimum threshold for DDF selection using dry day exclusion method.

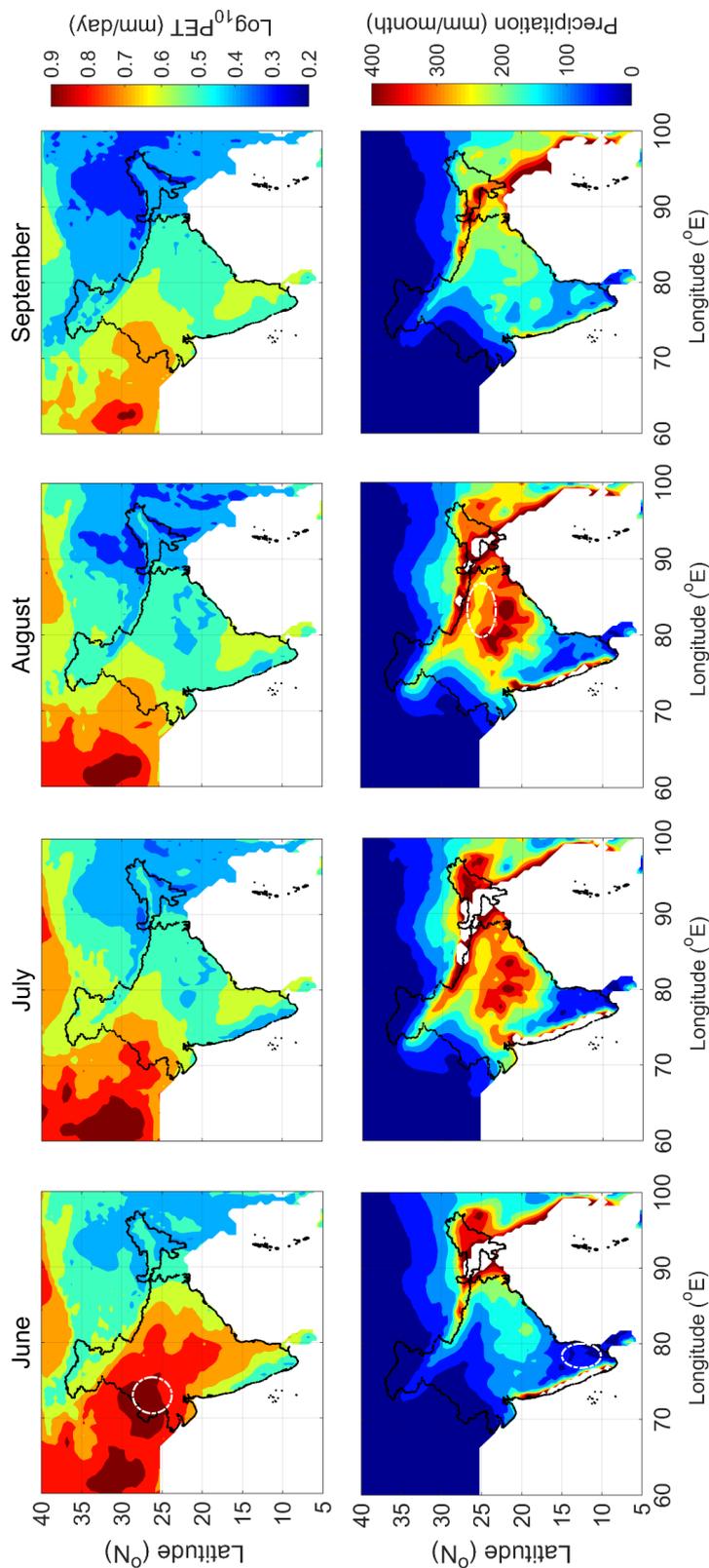
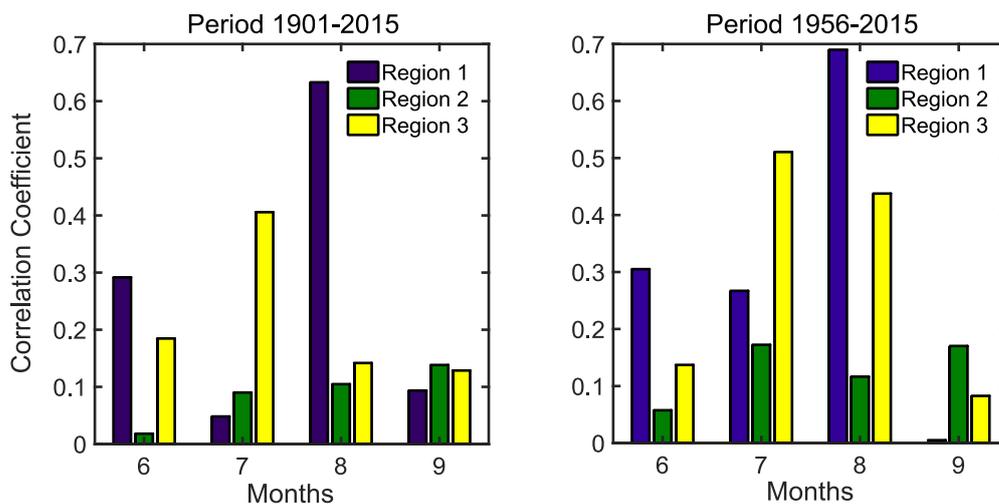


Figure 2. Monthly averaged maps of potential evapo-transpiration rate and precipitation during June-September.



1077 **Figure 3.** Correlation coefficients between DI and DDF values for all monsoon months for two
1078 different climatic periods (a) 1901-2015 and (b) 1956-2015.

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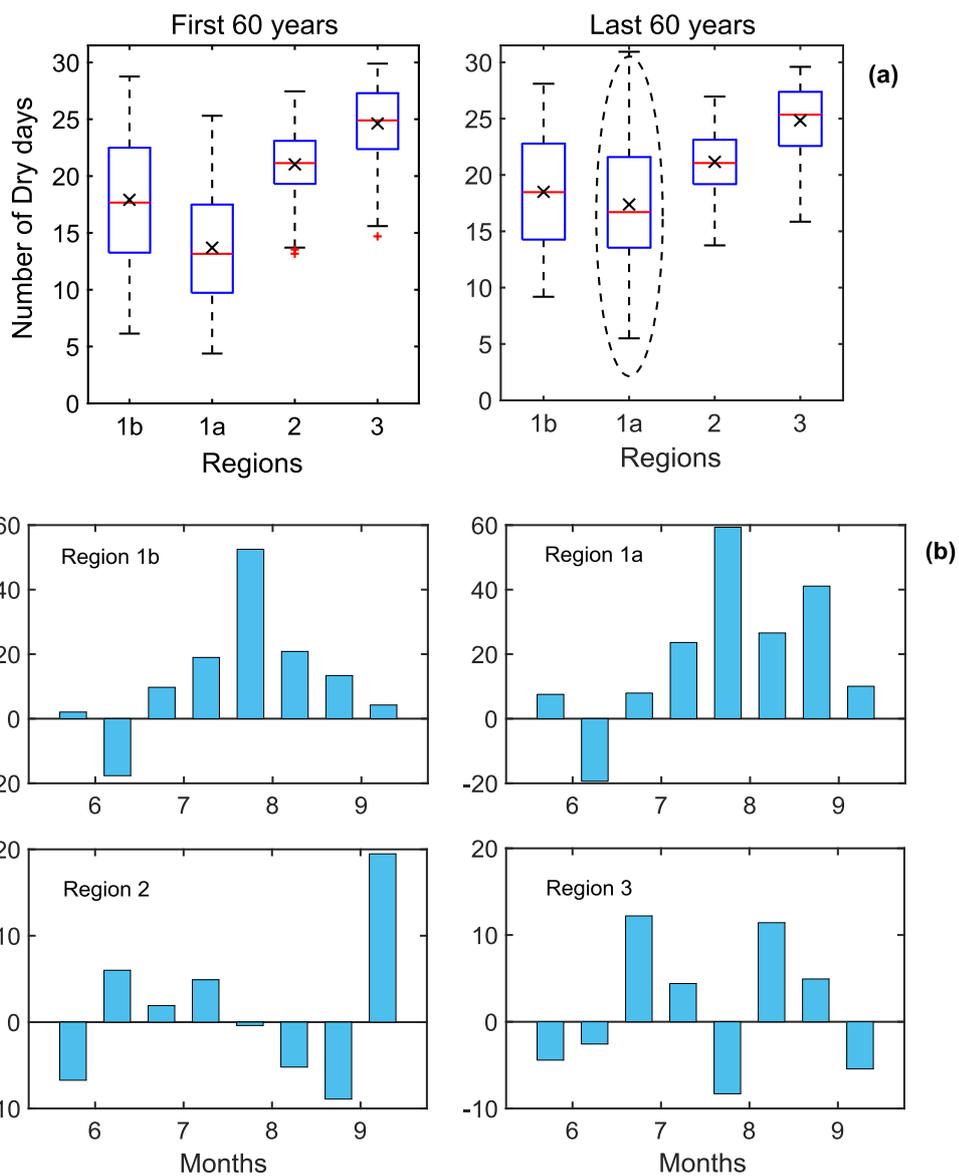
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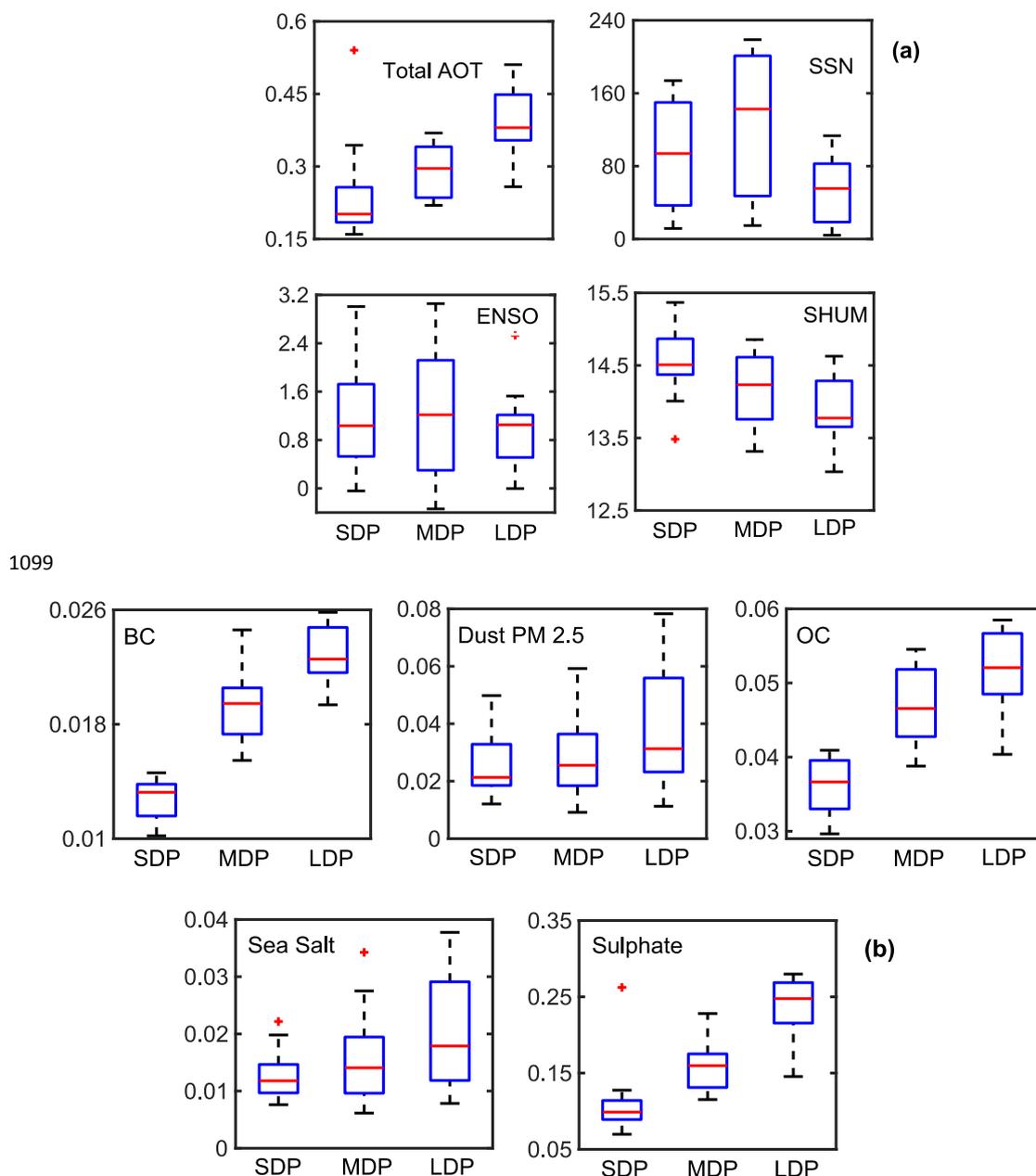
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Figure 4. Monthly mean and 15 day trends of DDF for regions 1a, 1b, 2 and 3.



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1101 **Figure 5.** Frequency distribution analysis results of various controlling factors behind DDF evolution
 1102 for various types of dry phase lengths over region 1a, (a) using general parameters like total aerosols,
 1103 SSN, ENSO and humidity (b) Variation of DDF corresponding to 5 aerosol components such as BC,
 1104 Dust PM 2.5, OC, Sea Salt and Sulphates.

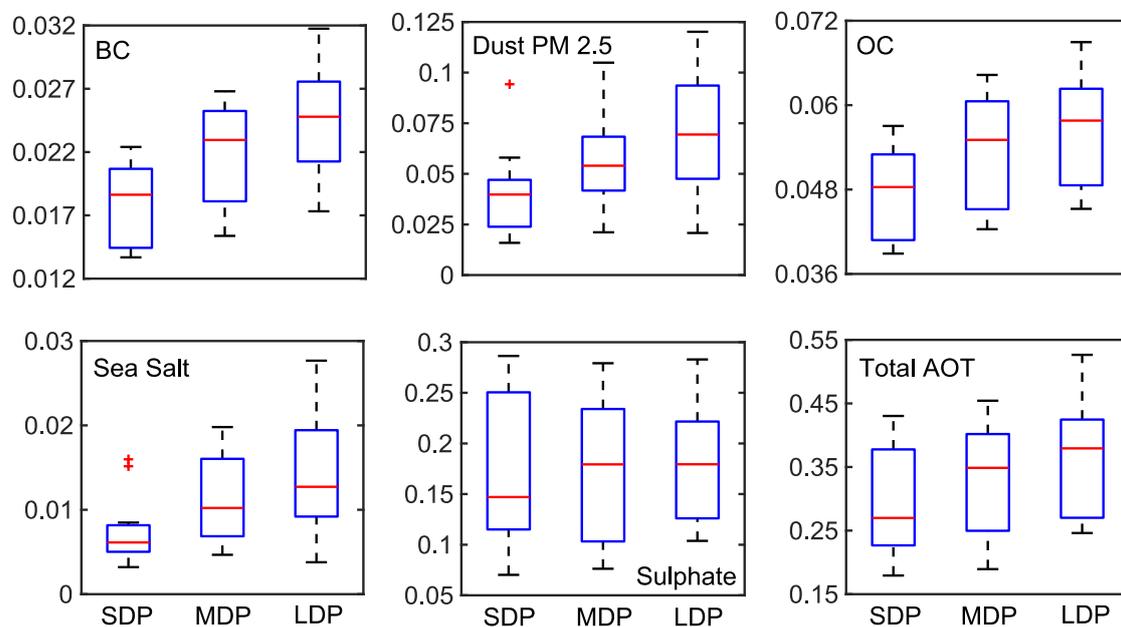
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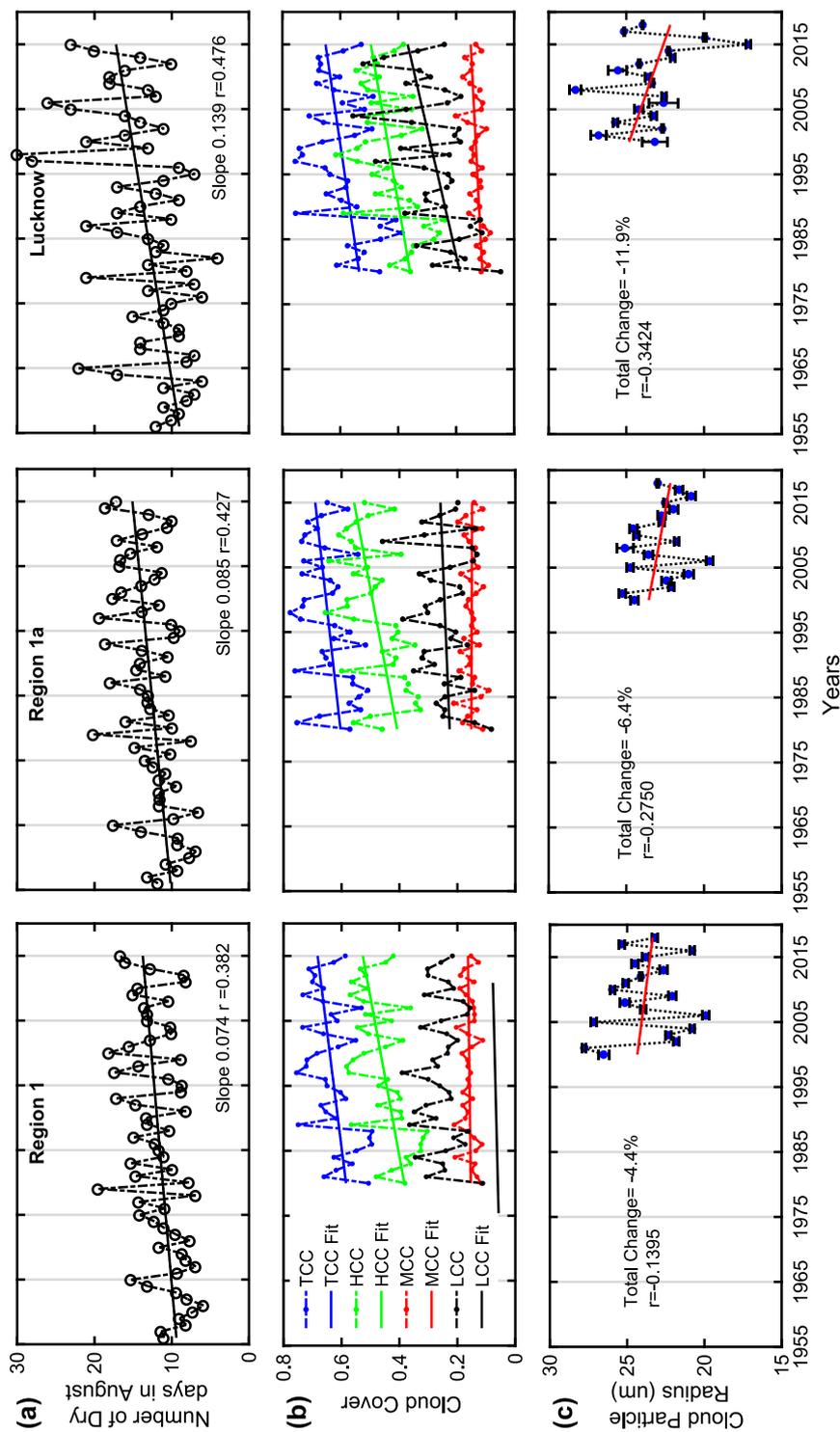
1110 **Figure 6.** Frequency distribution analysis results of various controlling factors behind DDF evolution
1111 for various types of dry phase lengths over Lucknow corresponding to 5 aerosol components such as
1112 BC, Dust PM 2.5, OC, Sea Salt and Sulphates.

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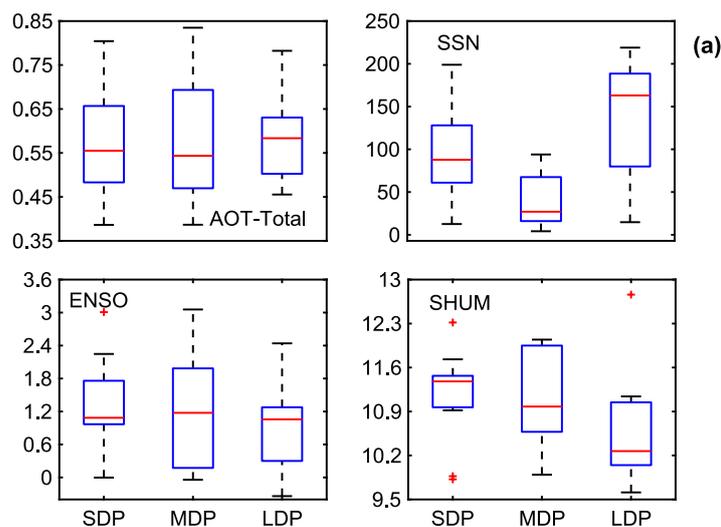
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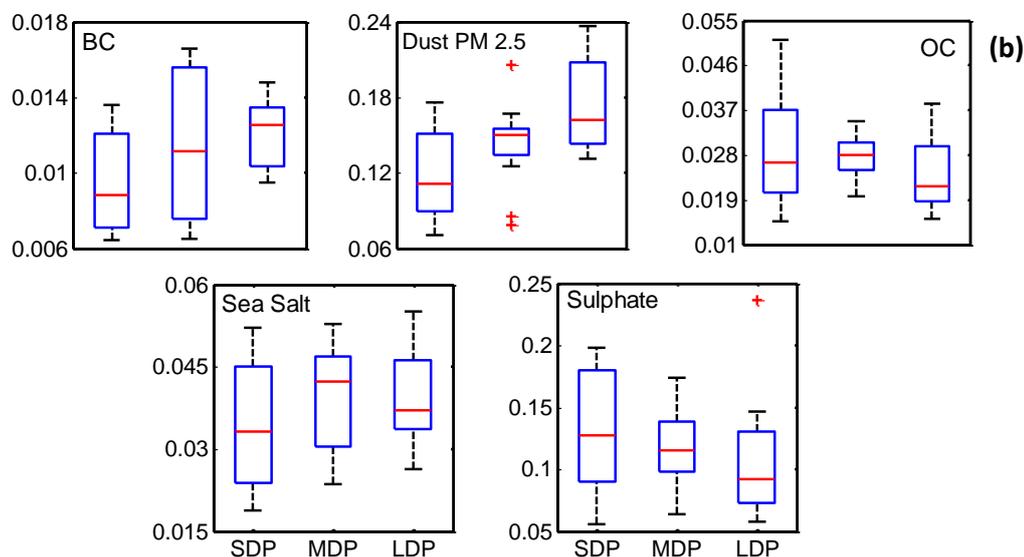
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 1118 **Figure 7.** Statistical comparison of the climatology of all parameters during August for region 1, region 1a, Lucknow during various time spans
 1119 (a) Dry Day Frequency values between 1956-2015, (b) Cloud cover parameters (TCC,HCC,MCC,LCC) during 1980-2015 and (c) Cloud Particle
 1120 Radius values over 2000-2018



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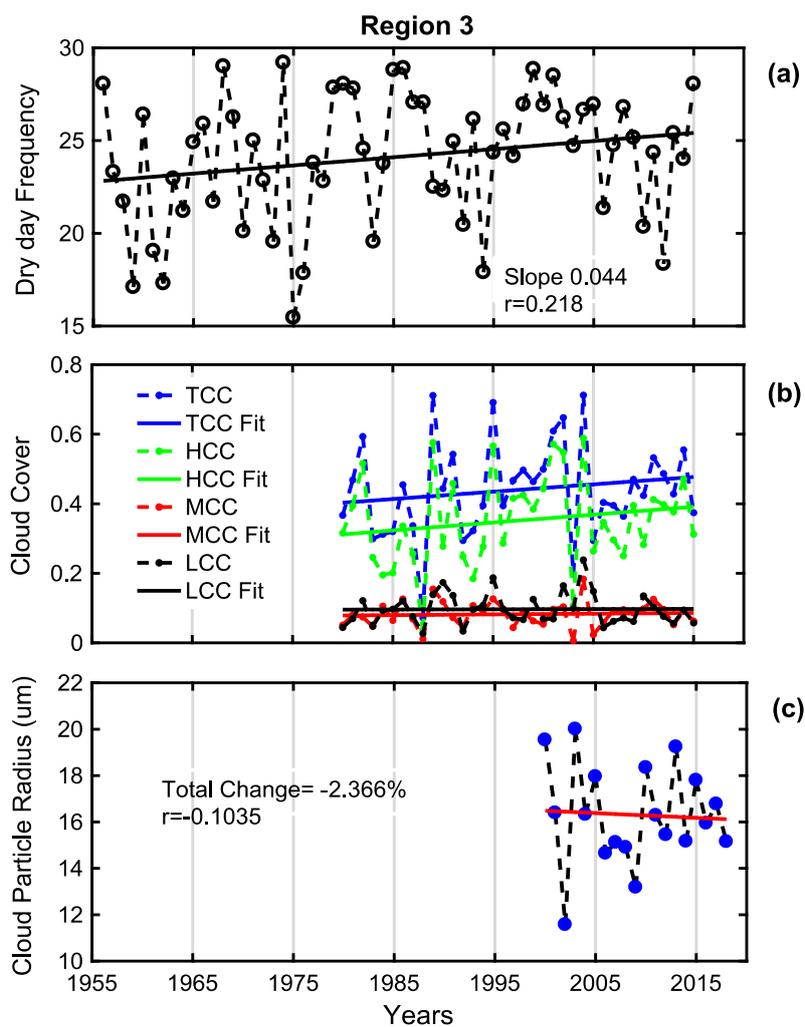


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1124 **Figure 8.** Frequency distribution analysis results of various controlling factors behind DDF evolution
1125 for various types of dry phase lengths over region 3, (a) using general parameters like total aerosols,
1126 SSN, ENSO and humidity (b) Variation of DDF corresponding to 5 aerosol components such as BC,
1127 Dust PM 2.5, OC, Sea Salt and Sulphates.

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1130 **Figure 9.** Statistical comparison of the climatology of all parameters during July for region 3
1131 during various time spans (a) Dry Day Frequency values between 1956-2015, (b) Cloud cover
1132 parameters (TCC,HCC,MCC,LCC) during 1980-2015 and (c) Cloud Particle Radius values
1133 over 2000-2018.

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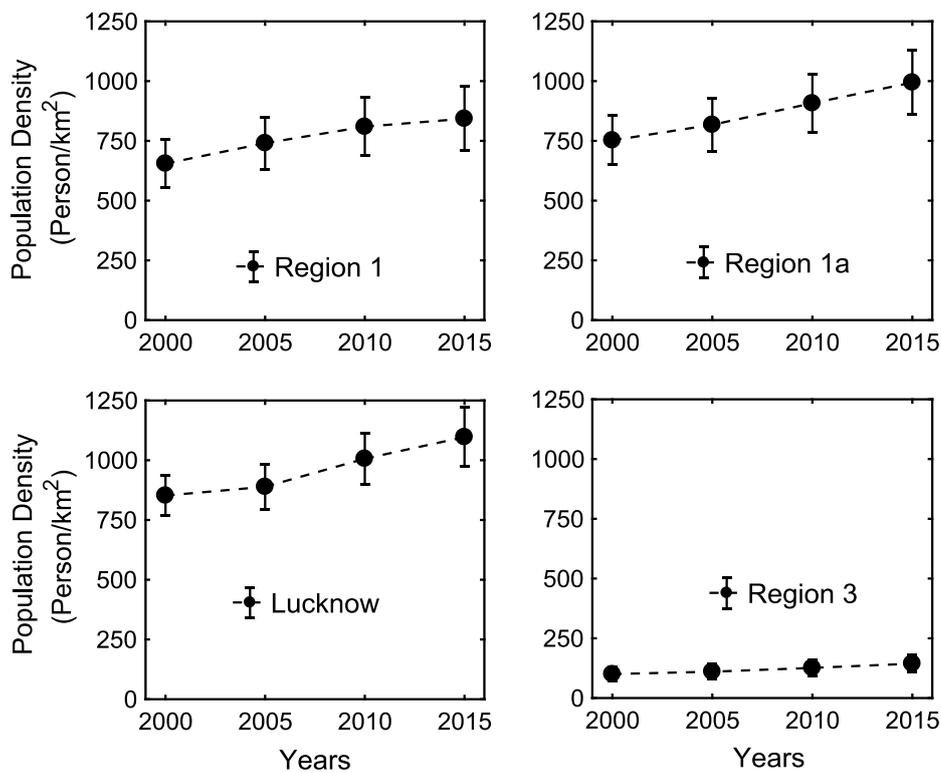
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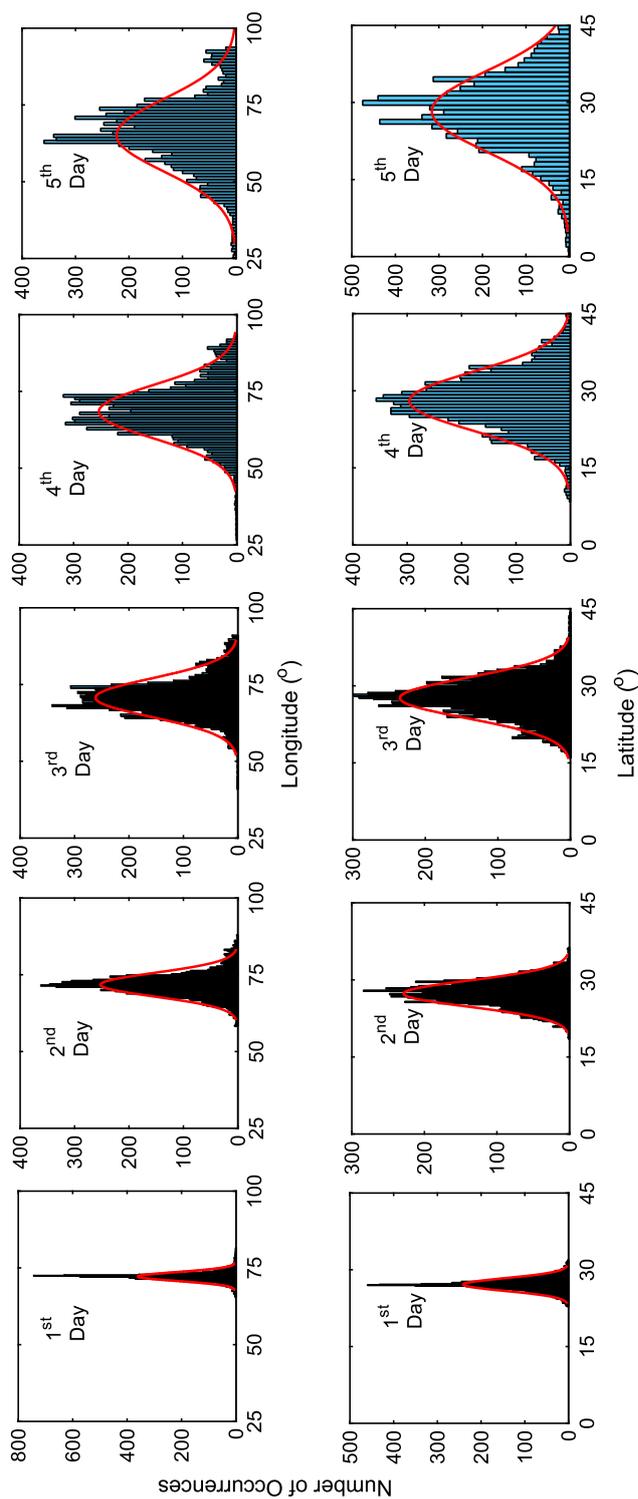


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1143 **Figure 10.** Region-wise population densities for Region 1, 1a, Lucknow and Region 3
1144 comprising historical data (2000-2015) and projected data (2020)



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1147 **Figure 11.** Statistical representation of all back trajectory endpoints with respect to latitude and longitude starting from the central grid point (27
1148 N, 72.5 E) of Region 3.

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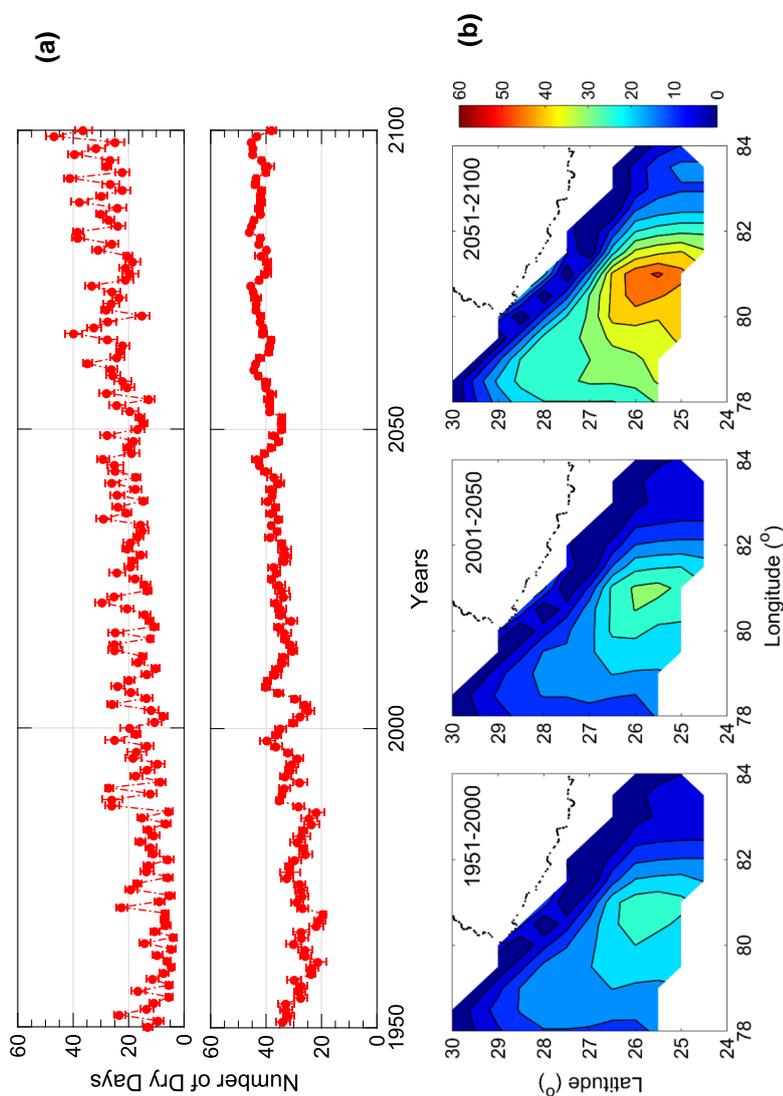


Figure 12. (a) Climatic variations in dry day frequency over Region 1 and 3 containing both historical data (upto 2005) and RCP8.5 projections (2006-2100) of multi model mean from 3 selected GCMs (b) Projected lat-lon maps of DDF for all three 50 year periods from 1951-2100.

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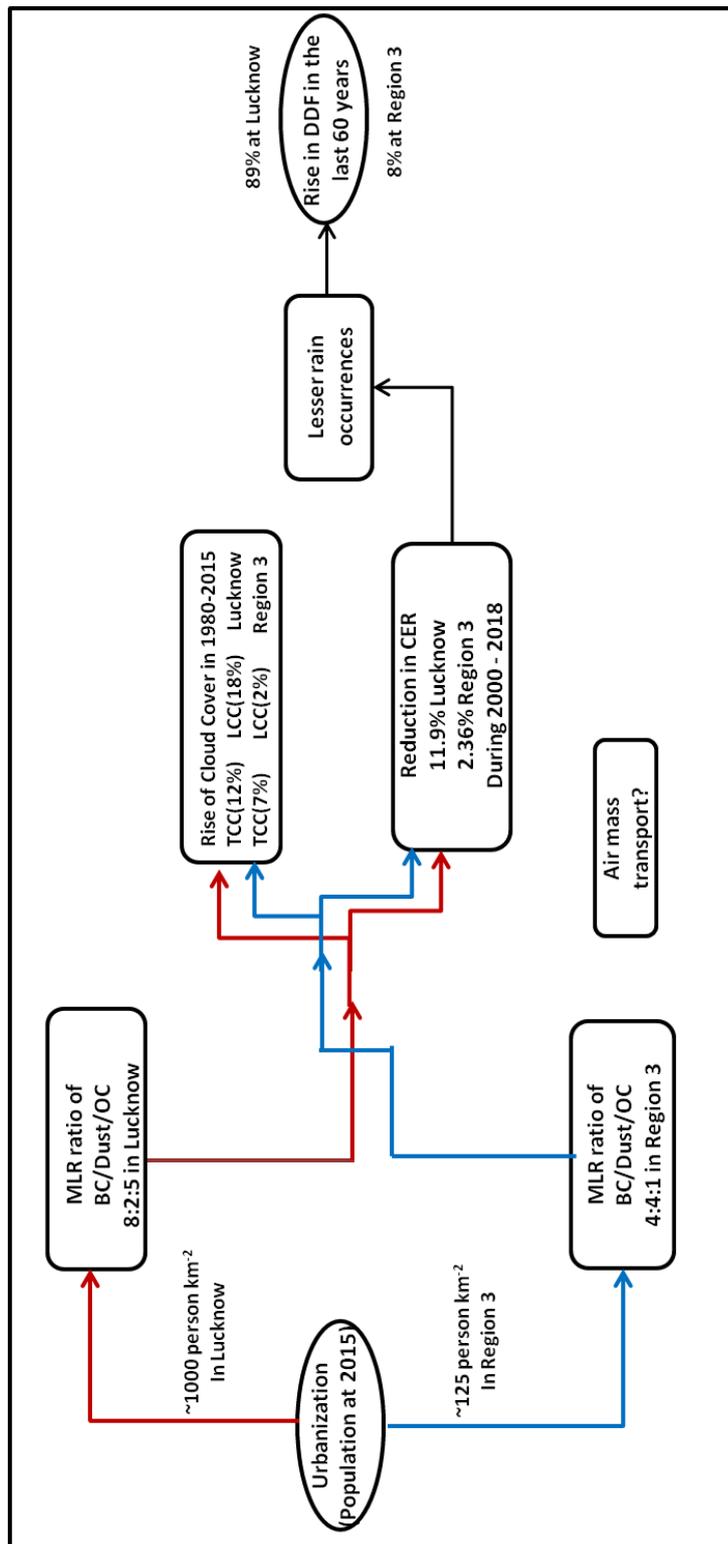
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Figure 13. Possible mechanism behind the extension of drying phases in Lucknow and region 3 during the mid-monsoon period.

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