



Community level perceptions of the monsoon onset, withdrawal and climatic trends in Bangladesh

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A structured questionnaire study was carried out in 6 different regions in Bangladesh in order to give insight into how the different communities define the monsoon. The respondents were asked how they define the monsoon onset and withdrawal, and by how much these can vary from year to year. They were also asked about how they perceive changes in onset and withdrawal dates and total monsoonal rainfall during the past 20 years.

Bangladesh is a developing country with a large proportion of the population living in rural areas and employed in the agricultural sector. It is foreseen that these communities will be most affected by changes in the climate. These groups were considered to be the main stakeholders when considering climate change, due to the direct influence the monsoon has on their livelihood and the food supply for the entire nation. Agricultural workers were therefore the main group targeted in this study. The main aim of the study was to create a framework for defining the monsoon in order to increase the usability of results in future impact-related studies. Refining definitions according to the perceptions of the main stakeholders helps to achieve this goal. Results show that rainfall is the main parameter used in defining the monsoon onset and withdrawal. This is possibly intuitive, however the monsoon onset was considered to be considerably earlier than previous scientific studies. This could be due to pre-monsoonal rainfall, however the respondents defined this type of rainfall separately to what they called the monsoon. The monsoon is considered to start earliest in the Sylhet region in northeast Bangladesh.