



GROUNDWATER FLOW MODELING FOR WATERSHED MANAGEMENT: AN APPLICATION IN HARD ROCK TERRAIN OF INDIA

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ABSTRACT: Modeling of groundwater flow in watersheds is of great concern in characterizing the hydrogeological environments. This paper presents an application of groundwater flow model using the finite difference method, to simulate flow conditions. Detailed studies have been conducted at Lokapavani micro watershed which is located at Karnataka state, India. Results from this computation served as a methodology for analyzing the groundwater behavior at micro level. During the modeling procedures, it has been found that the head changes in the aquifer system of watershed at any specified time is a function of various aquifer characteristics. These changes are obtained by solving the equation of flow through porous media. The output obtained from this model is of practical application to hydrogeologists and similar stake holders for applying appropriate aquifer management practices.

Keywords: Micro watershed; Groundwater Model; Finite difference method; Lokapavani

INTRODUCTION

Groundwater is a major source of water for domestic and agricultural requirements in many hard rock terrains. The abstraction of groundwater has been found increased tremendously in the last two decades due to the increasing demand to meet the agricultural needs in particular in India. The poor water resources management leads to the deterioration of aquifers. Groundwater modeling techniques help to simulate the behavior and flow system to evaluate the water balances, which is important in the resources management. [24, 16, 17, 14, 13, 1, 9, 10, 11, 4, 26, 19, 22, 23, 27, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8] have applied modeling techniques and analyzed few groundwater systems in India. An attempt has been made in this study to simulate the groundwater system of Lokapavani micro watershed by constructing and operating a mathematical model, which assumes the appearance of the actual aquifer behavior.

About the Study Area

Lokapavani watershed is tributary of the Cauvery river and has its source at Honakere Hobli, Mandya district of Karnataka, India. The watershed spreads across latitude 12^o 25' and 12^o 48' North and longitudes 76^o 37' and 76^o 46' East (Figure 1). This is a perennial stream in the River basin of Cauvery. Geologically, the formations belong to the most ancient age, which are divisible into two groups as Dharwar schist as narrow linear belts and the peninsular gneisses / granites as hills.

The year may be divided in to four climatic seasons – February (dry with clear bright weather); March-May (hot); June-October (South west Monsoon) and November Retreating / Post Monsoon.

Groundwater Modeling

The process of mathematical modeling is comprised of four fundamental steps namely (i) formulation, (ii) approximation – transformation, (iii) computation and, (iv) application. Formulation refers to the process of deriving or selecting the basic equation(s) governing the flow of groundwater in the system, with the domain specifications and initial boundary conditions.

Approximation refers to the selection of a numerical method which can be used to solve the system of algebraic equations. Finite-Difference (FD). Finite Element (FE) and Integrated Finite – Difference (IFD) methods are some of the widely used concepts in modeling the groundwater systems.

The most important part of computation step refers to the process of obtaining a solution to the equations by using appropriate modeling. The application part of the groundwater modeling includes calibration or history matching of the observed and simulated heads, sensitivity analysis and prediction. Table 1 shows the some of the selected numerical methods adopted in groundwater modeling using Finite Difference method [12].

Table 1. Finite Difference Techniques for Solving Groundwater Flow Problems

Method	Description	Time – Step Restriction	Suitability
Forward difference (Explicit)	H (i,j,k+1) is calculated directly from H(i,j,k), H (i-1,j,k) and H(i,j-1,k). Effect of any change only spreads one mesh interval per time-step.	$\Delta t < \Delta X^2 S / 4T$	Short period analysis in unconfined aquifers when boundaries do not have any dominant effects
Backward difference (Implicit)	H(i,j,k+1) depends on the known value H(i,j,k) and the unknowns H(i,j+1, k+1), H(i,j,k+1), H(i-1, j,k+1) and H(i+1, j,k+1). This leads to simultaneous equations that can be solved using successive over relaxation.	None	Any type of problem, computing efforts is significant
Alternating Direction Explicit (ADE)	Two step procedure, uses a form of alternating direction techniques. The effect of a charge spreads across the field by the way of scanning the nodes.	$\Delta t < \Delta X^2 S / T$	Aquifers in which boundary effects are significant. Not suitable for logarithmic time increments`
Iterative Alternating Direction Implicit	Two step procedure. In the first step, equations are implicit in x-direction and in the second step, equations are implicit in y-direction. The sets of equations are solved by an interactive technique.	None	Any type of problems; suitable for log time increments; much computational time needed

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The groundwater flow model of Lokapavani micro watershed has been developed using standard finite difference techniques. The digital simulation model used in this study computes the head changes in the aquifer system at any specified time as a function of the various aquifer characteristics. These changes are obtained by solving the equation of flow through porous media. Although numerous analytical techniques exist, a digital model is necessary to treat the complex boundary conditions, aquifer heterogeneity and scale of the aquifer system. The governing equation of groundwater flow in Lokapavani micro watershed and its solution strategies have been discussed in this work. The partial differential equation (PDE), governing the flow of groundwater in a non-homogeneous, anisotropic aquifer, where the vertical components of flow are small to be neglected (Prickett and Lonquist, 1971; Rushton and Redshaw, 1979) is

$$\delta/\delta x (Tx \delta h/\delta x) + \delta/\delta y (Ty \delta h/\delta y) = s \delta h/\delta t \pm w(x, y, t).....(1)$$

Where, Tx and Ty are the transmissibility parameters in x and y coordinates (L²/T); ‘s’ is the appropriate storage coefficient, ‘h’ is the hydraulic head (L); ‘t’ is the time increment (T) and ‘w’ is the fraction of recharge or discharge (L/T) with reference to space and time. The general solution of equation (1) does not exist. The approximate solution of the equation is obtained by numerical methods like finite – difference method has been adopted in this study.

Finite – difference method is the process of replacing the partial derivatives at a point by the ratio of changes in variables over a finite interval. Both time and space variables are treated as discrete parameters. For this, the region covered by the function must be subdivided into a large number of grid blocks as shown in Figure 2. The values of all variables that best represent the condition of the grids are assigned to nodes which are located at the centers of sub-regions. The distance between the nodes is represented by Δx and Δy in x and y directions. This shows the transient flow conditions depicting the head distribution at (k) and (k+ 1) time levels. Subscripts ‘i’ and ‘j’ are used to index the row and column of a node and ‘k’ is the index of time.

The PDE (Partial Differential Equation) of backward difference (Implicit) formulation of equation (1) becomes,

$$\delta/\delta x (T_x \delta h_{k+1}/\delta x) + \delta/\delta y (T_y \delta h_{k+1}/\delta y) = S \delta h_{k+1} - \delta h_k / \delta t \pm W \dots\dots (2)$$

On modifying the equation (2) by using the notations of Figure 2, gives equation (3).

$$AH (i+1, j, k + 1) + BH (i, j- 1, k + 1) + CH (i-1, j, k+ 1) + DH (i, j+1, k + 1) - (A+B+C+D) H (i, j, k + 1) = F (H(i, j, k + 1) - (H (i, j, k)) \pm W (i, j) \dots\dots(3)$$

Solving all the equations at each time step is a time consuming process which can become manageable only by adopting iterative techniques. The method which has proved to be convenient for groundwater flow problems is the technique of Successive over Relaxation (SOR) [Rushton and Redshaw, 1979].

In describing the SOR method, further it is helpful to denote a coefficient E as,

$$E = A+B+C+ D + S (i,j) / \delta t = A + B + C + D + F \dots\dots\dots (4)$$

Equation (3) can be written in a form similar to that of the explicit procedure as,

$$H (i, j, k + 1) = [AH (i+ 1, j, k + 1) + BH (i,j-1, k + 1) + CH (i-1,j, k + 1) + DH (j, j +1, k+1) + FH (i, j, k) \pm W (i, j)] / E \dots\dots\dots (5)$$

This equation allows the direct computation of head at (k+1) time level but it depends on the other heads of the same time step which, in the early stages of the computation, might not have reached their correct value. Therefore, the head distribution given by the use of equation (5) will be an under estimate of the true values. In order to overcome this an over relaxation factor of ‘W’ (Remson et al, 1965) is introduced to equation (5) so that the new approximation to the potential is given by,

$$H(i,j,k+1,M+1) = H(i,j,k+1,M) + W \Delta H (i,j,k + 1, M + 1,M) \dots\dots\dots (6)$$

Where, $\Delta H (i,j, k+1, M+1,M)$ is the change in potential between (M) and (M+1) iterations. Equation (6) is used at each node in turn, as the iterations proceed; convergence to a steady value is achieved. The over relaxation factor normally ranges from 1.0 to 2.0 (Remson et.al, 1965). After several trial runs with the computer model, a factor of 1.5 has been taken and has been used in this study.

In order to test the convergence, the error in satisfying the finite difference form of the differential equation (2) is calculated from equation (5) as,

$$ERROR = AH (i +1, j +1) + BH (i, j-1, k + 1) + CH (i-1, j, k+1) + DH (i, j+1, k + 1) - FH (i,j,k+1) \pm W (i,j) \dots\dots\dots (7)$$

An error criteria of 0.01 has been used in the present analysis. Iterations continued in the process till the computed error value became lesser than this amount. A two dimensional groundwater flow model written in GW BASIC based on [21] has been utilized for computing the nodal yields, flows and permeability values. Each step of the computation used around 61 days time step and gives the result of water level distribution at the first day of every alternate month. The nodal transmissibility values are being refined at all the steps to adopt transient conditions.

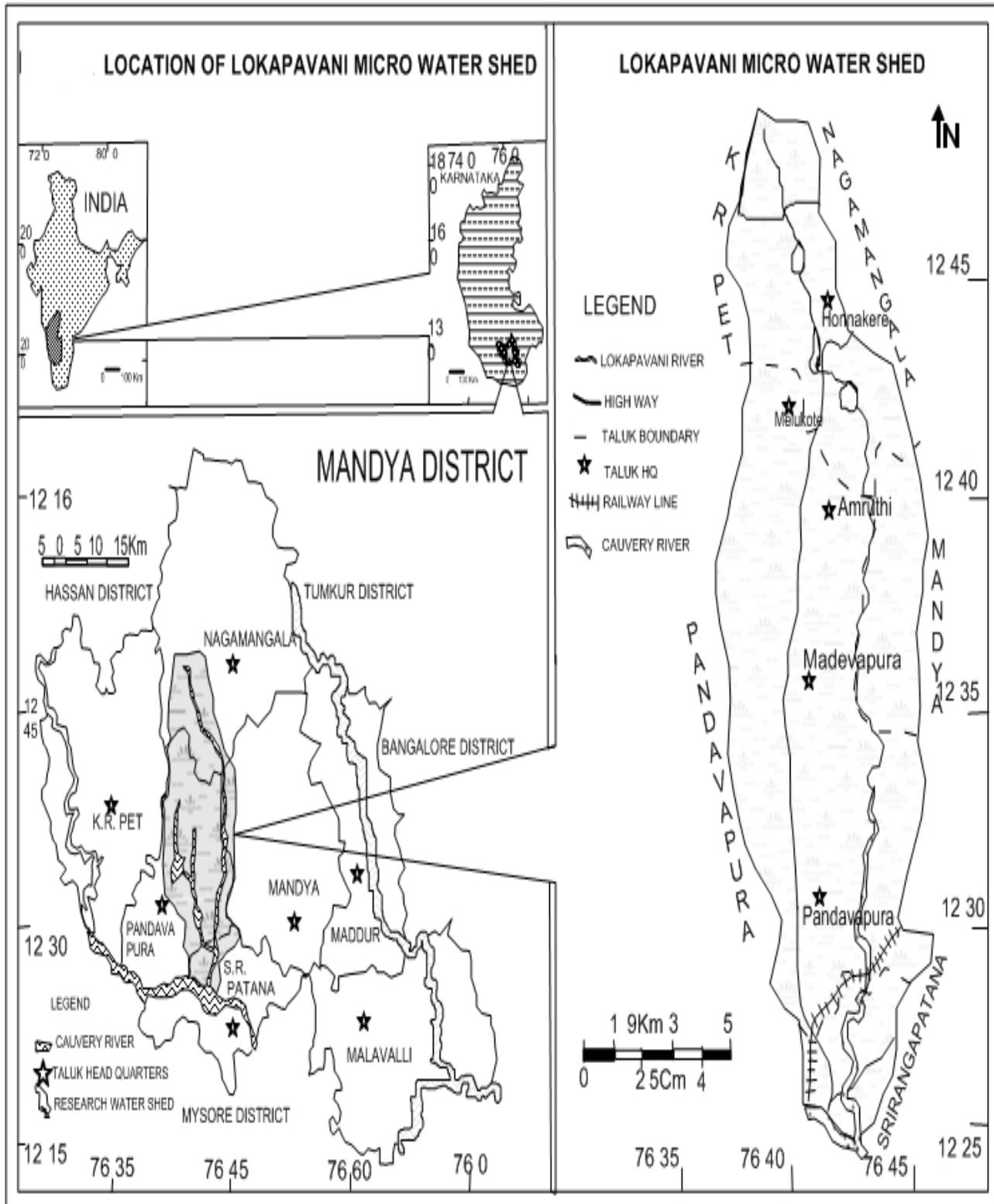


Figure 1. Location of the study area

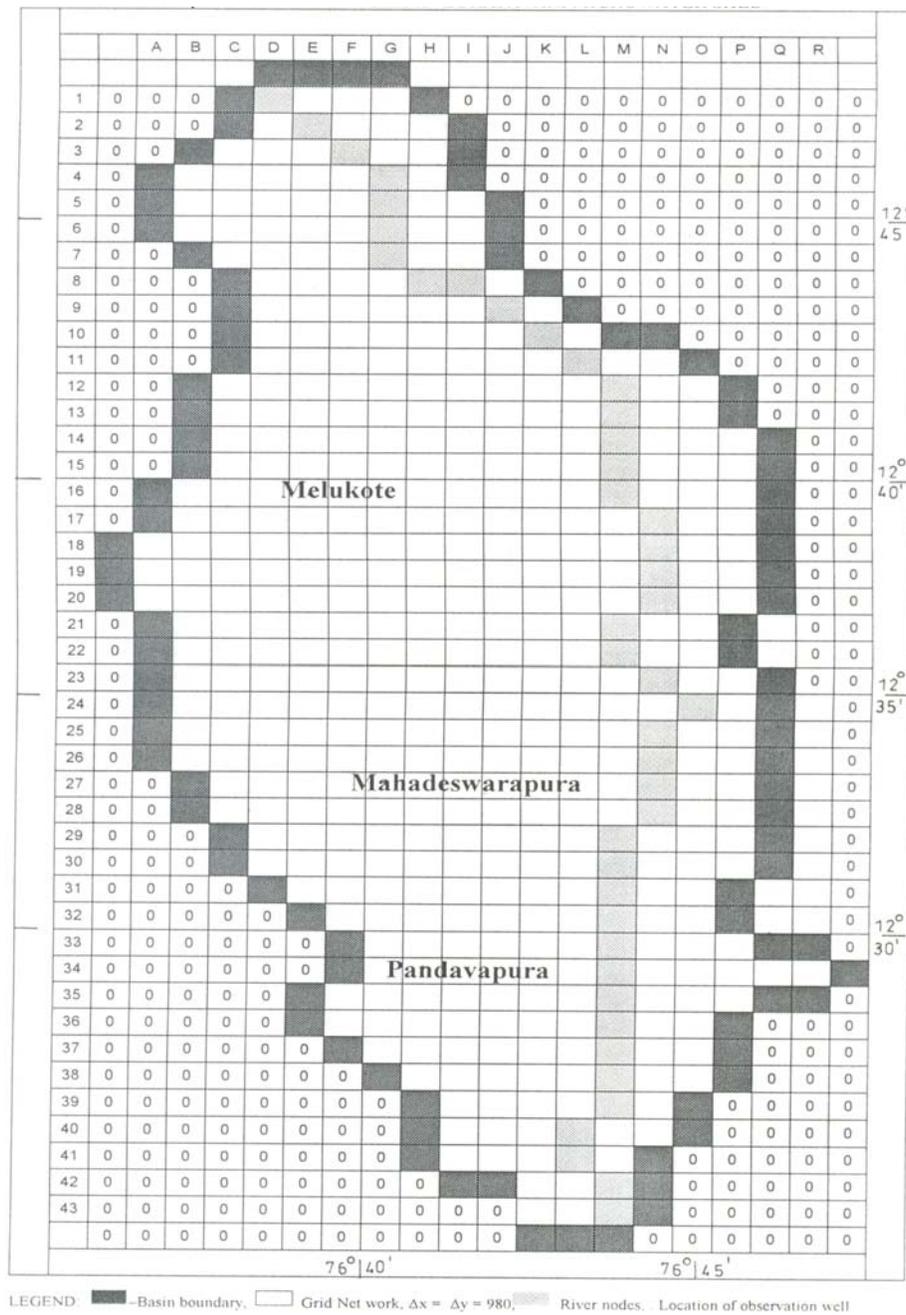
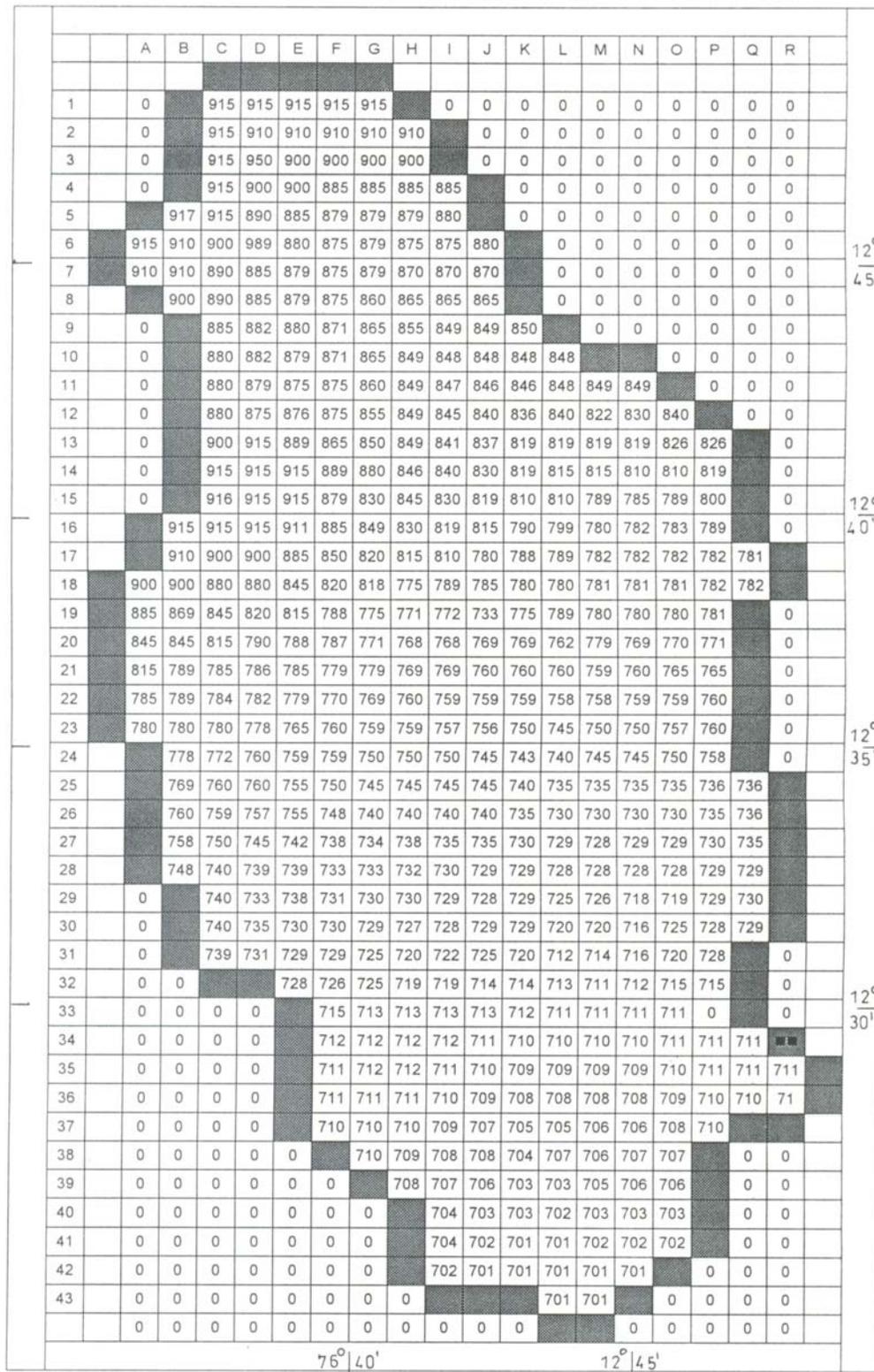


Figure 2. Nodal network of Lokapavani watershed

The method of successive over relaxation used in backward difference (implicit) formulation has been used completely for simulating the aquifers of Lokapavani micro watershed, as the method is better than the forward difference (explicit) formulation and used lesser computational time.

In order to avoid manual plotting of observed and predicted heads and to save the time lapse between successive runs in the computer, options have been included to input systematic water level data of wells falling on or adjacent to the node. The differences between predicted and observed head values have been taken as output at all the steps of the model. Slight modifications are necessary at one place or the other in the program when it is to be used for other watersheds.



LEGEND: -Basin boundary, Grid Net work, Δx = Δy = 980

Figure 3. Initial waterlevel of Lokapavani watershed

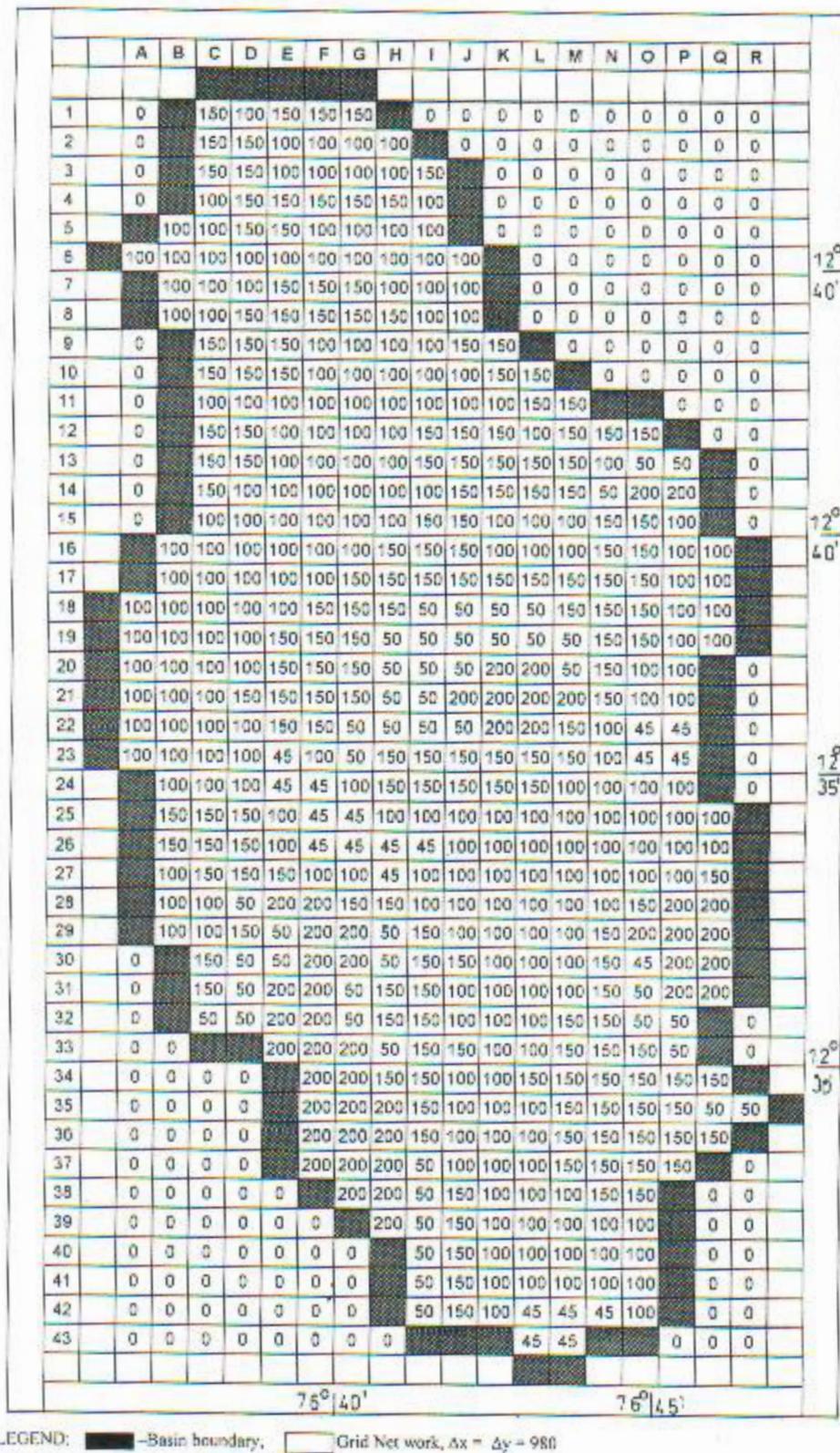
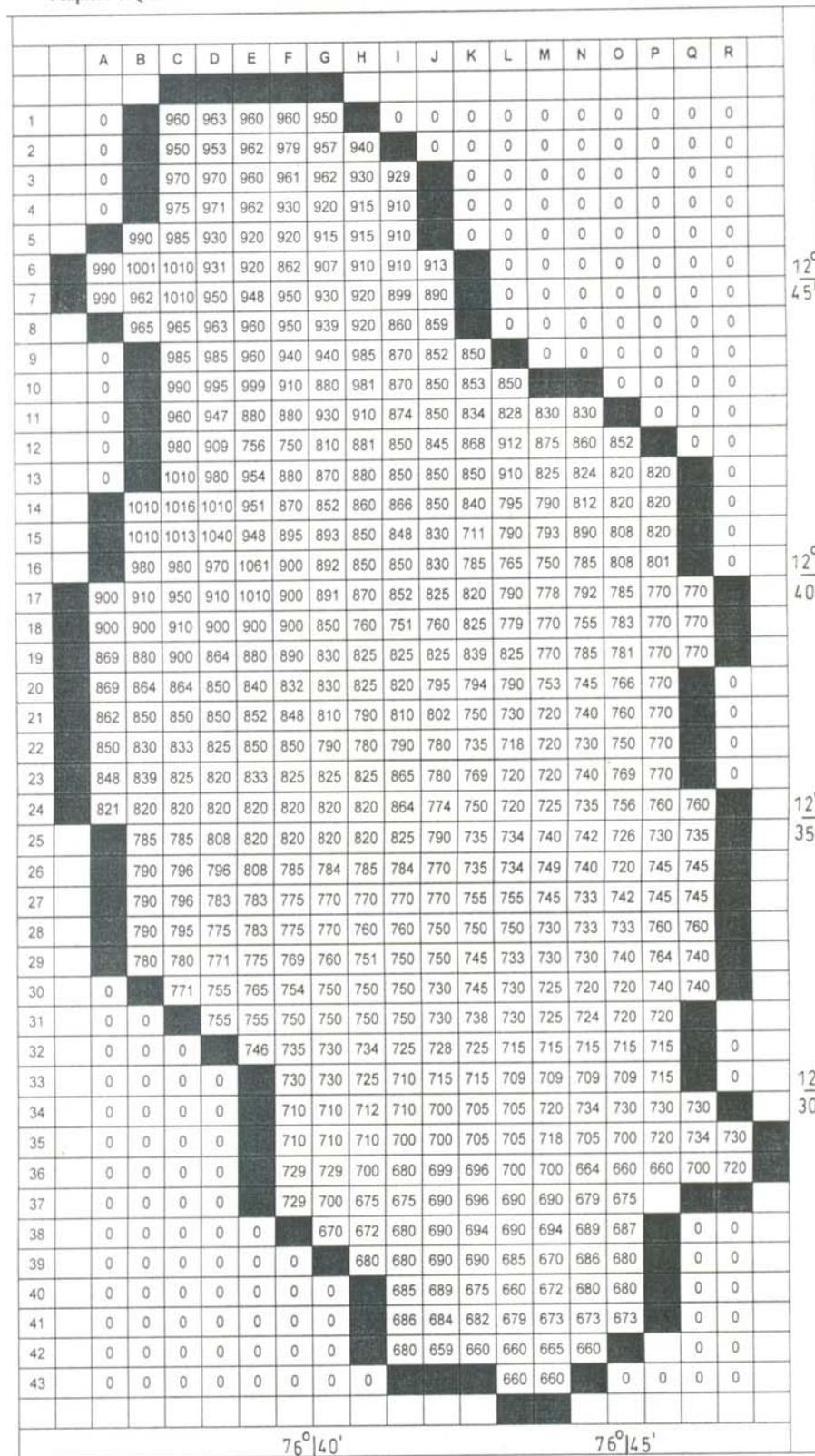


Figure 4. Aquifer transmissibility of Lokapavani watershed



LEGEND: -Basin boundary, Grid Net work, Δx = Δy = 980

Figure 5. Aquifer basement topography of Lokapavani watershed

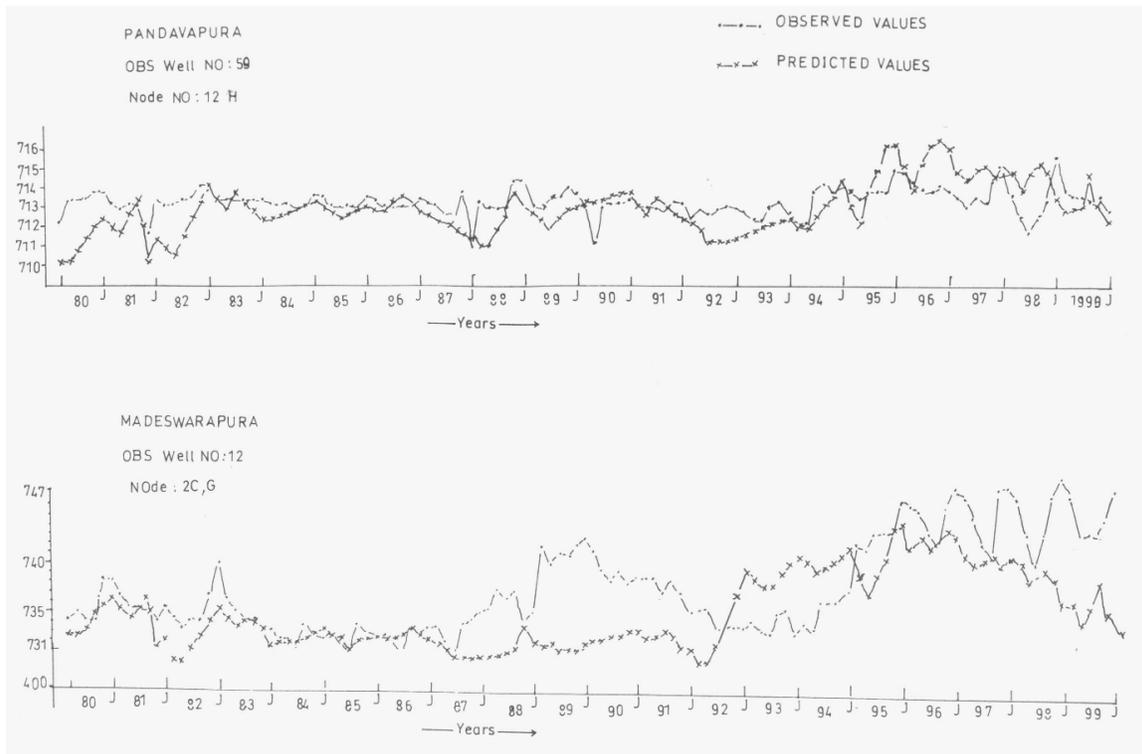


Figure 6. Simulated and observed water level hydrographs

During the model design, a finite – difference grid is superposed over the map of Lokapavani micro watershed. The aquifer is thus divided into volumes having dimensions $m\Delta x \Delta y$. Where ‘m’ is the thickness of the aquifer used in the model. The position of nodes can be identified by their column and row integer subscripts i.e., ‘i’ and ‘j’, starting from the left hand top corner. The network of this micro watershed model contains 18 columns and 43 rows amounting 774 nodes in which 108 are boundary nodes and 450 nodes lying within these boundary nodes are the active nodes of the model. As the basin is formed by an aquifer of extensive areal extent a grid spacing of $\Delta x = \Delta y = 980$ m has been used in this study.

It is very essential in these techniques that the head computed for a node containing a pumping well is not the head in the well, but rather it represents an average hydraulic head for the entire nodal block. The basic assumptions of the present model for calculation of the head in a node are as follows:

1. The aquifer is unconfined in major part of the model bounded with an impermeable basement at depth; no flow along basin divide and in hilly and forested terrain.
2. Groundwater obeys Darcy’s law and the flow is two-dimensional.
3. Transmissibility, Rainfall recharge in the system is not constant with space and time.
4. The interval of normal water table fluctuation has a fairly narrow range of depth and in this interval the change of hydraulic conductivity is very small and hence permeability in the vertical section is assumed to be constant.

The water level above MSL data of January 1980 forms the initial data (Figure 3) is used as input to the model. Zero transmissibility values have been assigned to all the nodes located outside the basin boundary and in the hilly and forested terrain (Figure 4). The nodal permeability values have been computed using the relation,

$$P(i, j) = TS(i, j) / (HJ(i, j)) \dots\dots\dots (8)$$

Where P is the permeability (m/d), TS is the Transmissibility (m^2/d), HJ is the water level altitude above M.S.L. The storage coefficient values the best result at 0.01. Values obtained from geophysical sounding have been used in obtaining the aquifer basement depth (Figure 5).

The model calibration procedure is based on matching the simulated potentials with the observed ones by adjusting the various input parameters. Model calibration has been done in this study from 1980 to 1999. Figure 6 shows the simulated and observed well hydrographs of the present model at selected locations. It could be seen that both the graphs match very well and this gives a good indication of the overall accuracy of parameters used in the model. This program could further be used for predictions.

CONCLUSION

Finite difference techniques have been followed for developing the groundwater flow model for Lokapavani micro watershed. It has been observed that head changes in the aquifer system of watershed at any specified time is a function of various aquifer characteristics. These changes are obtained by solving the equation of flow through porous media. The groundwater flow model conducted in this study is an example of applying modelling techniques to watershed to help to understand the hydrogeological characteristics at micro level.

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