

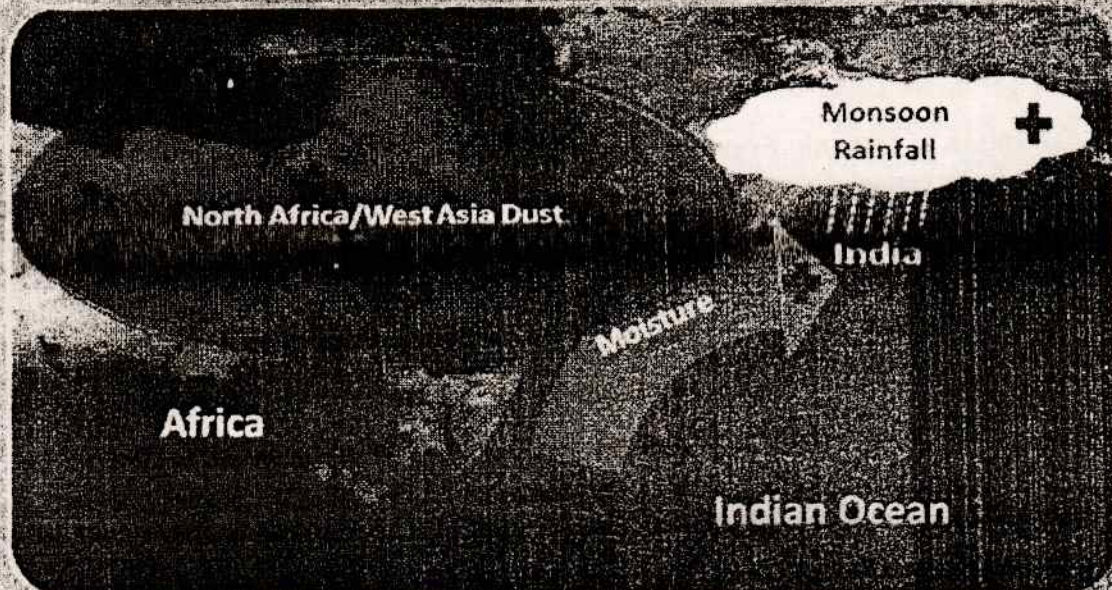
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Interaction between west-Asian dust aerosols and Indian monsoon rainfall on short time-scales
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Accurate and Robust Estimation of Aerosol Mass Concentration Based on Lidar Signal and other Sensor Packages: A Regression Based Approach	191
P. Dave, S. Jain, M. Bhushan, C. Venkataraman, J-f. Leon, H. Delbarre, S. Kedia, B. Guinot	
Short-Term Perturbations in Ambient Particulate Matter and Proportion of Black Carbon in PM₁₀ during a Firecracker Bursting Episode	196
Deepanjan Majumdar, A. G. Gavane	
Sistan Dust Storms and Influence over Arabian Sea and Indian Subcontinent	200
D. G. Kaskaoutis, E. E. Houssos, A. Rashki, U. C. Dumka, A. Bartzokas	
Concentrations and Carcinogenic Potencies of Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons in Aerosols at A Semi Arid Region of India	203
Amit Masih, J. K. Lal, Ajay Taneja	
Temporal Variation of Aerosol Optical Depth in Dehradun - A Study using MODIS and MISR Level 3 Products	207
Manu Mehta	
Characterization of Organic Fractions Associated with Coarser Particulates in Varanasi during Winter-2014	210
V. Murari, Poonam, Yogesh Kant, T. Banerjee	
Temporal Characterization of Black Carbon Aerosols and their Contribution to Radiative Forcing over Dibrugarh	214
Jhuma Biswas, Tamanna Subba, Binita Pathak, P. K. Bhuyan	
Extensive Study of Scattering Properties of Aerosols at a Location in Brahmaputra Basin, North-East India	219
Tamanna Subba, Binita Pathak, Pradip Kumar Bhuyan	
First Results of Atmospheric Aerosol and Concurrent Meteorological Measurements over A Remote Site, Panchgaon in CNCR	224
P. C. S. Devara, J. P. Dudeja, S. Tiwari, A.K. Srivastava, K. Vijayakumar, K. Sehrawati, S. K. Attri	
Cloud Microphysical Characteristics of Deficient and Excess Indian Summer Monsoons Inferred from Modis Data	228
G. R. Chinthala, Dharmaraj T., M. N. Patil, Thara Prabharan	
Assessment of the Impact of Aerosols on Shortwave Radiation, Cloud Optical Depth and Rainfall in North-East India	230
Binita Pathak, Papori Dahutia, Geetashree Kakoti, Pradip Kumar Bhuyan	
Industrial Area Air Pollution Due to Odor Causing VOCs and Emerging Trends in Odor Measurement	236
A. B. Zaware, S. Kaur, R. Kumar	

Temporal Characterization of Black Carbon Aerosols and their Contribution to Radiative Forcing over Dibrugarh

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Introduction

The earth's climate is controlled by the amount of solar radiation intercepted by the planet and the part of the energy that is absorbed. Among different climate forcing agents similar to atmospheric Ozone, Green House Gases, etc. atmospheric aerosols are one of the vital constituents of the earth's atmosphere which contributes to global climate change, but with utmost uncertainty. Aerosols can influence climate directly by scattering and absorbing a fraction of incoming solar radiation and indirectly by modulating the earth's radiation budget through their impact on cloud life cycle, cloud droplet size distribution and cloud liquid/ice water content and semi directly by evaporating the clouds. Most aerosols such as sea salt particles, sulfates, nitrates, organic carbons (OC) etc can directly reflect sunlight back into space and hence enhancing planetary albedo (reflectance) and leading to a negative surface forcing (cooling) but the attendance of some absorbing aerosols such as Elemental Carbon (EC) or Black Carbon (BC) can alter the sign of forcing from negative to positive (heating). BC is the largest absorber of solar radiation in the atmosphere both in shortwave and long wave region and is recognized to be the second most powerful contributor to climate change next to carbon dioxide which is produced mostly as a result of partial combustion of fossil fuels such as coal, diesel, petrol etc. as well as because of usage of bio fuel and biomass burning. Study of BC aerosols are gaining considerable significance due to its ability to absorb solar radiation, heat the atmosphere and Influence the air quality and climate on local, regional and global scales. BC emission from NE-India has significant effect on BC contamination over South-east Tibetan Plateau (Cao et al., 2010).

The contribution of aerosols in affecting the surface temperature by modifying the balance between incoming and outgoing radiative energy fluxes which causes climate change is evaluated by radiative forcing of the atmosphere. Tropospheric BC aerosol which mainly absorbs incident solar radiation leads to positive radiative forcing. The present study aims at the temporal characterization of BC aerosols and their contribution to radiative forcing over Dibrugarh (27.3°N, 94.6°E, 111 m amsl) for the period March, 2008-March, 2012. The study location is scattered all over with tropical vegetation and surrounded by some oil and natural gas fields. The unique peculiarity of the study location is such that it is surrounded by the vast Himalayan range and Tibetan Plateau to the north, Garo-Khasi-Jayantia and Naga hills to the south and mountains of Yanam to the east, but is open to the west side towards the Indo-Gangetic plains (IGP) which allows transport of aerosols to the study location from pollutant regions of IGP (Gogoi et al., 2009; Pathak et al., 2012). Some more details of the study location and meteorology have been described by Pathak et al. (2013) and references therein.

Methodology

Instrumentations

The near-surface aerosol mass concentration of composite aerosols, BC mass concentration and spectral aerosol optical depths (AODs) are measured by Quartz Crystal Microbalance (QCM) Impactor (model PC-2, California Measurements Inc., USA), Aethalometer (model AE 31-ER, Magee Scientific, USA) and a 10 channel Multiwavelength solar radiometer (MWR) respectively for the period March, 2008-March, 2012 over Dibrugarh. The QCM provides aerosols mass concentration collected at 10 different stage as a function