

Research Article

On the Changing Snow Contribution to Runoff across Türkiye

Türkiye Geneline Kar Erimesinin Akışa Katkısındaki Değişimin İncelenmesi

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Abstract

Contribution of snowfall to runoff is especially important in snow-dominated regions where hydrological processes are mostly influenced by snowmelt. In this study, the contribution of snowfall to runoff in Türkiye for the last 21 years was examined in the light of the hydrological model results globally provided by National Aeronautics and Space Administration. The model outputs of the Global Land Data Assimilation System v2.1, in which observed and remote sensing products are assimilated, were used in this study. The snow dominant regions of Türkiye for the last 21 years were revealed, and the ratio of the spatially averaged maximum snow water equivalent to runoff (Rsr) values, an indicator showing snowmelt contribution to runoff, were calculated for a period of 11-years from 2000 to 2021 (period 1:2000-2010, period 2: 2011-2021). These Rsr values were compared across Türkiye to see whether they were decreasing or increasing in the snow-dominated regions. According to the results of the analysis, Rsr values are decreasing in all snow-dominated regions. Rsr values decreased by up to 50 percent in the last 11-year period in the regions receiving high snowfall, such as the upper Euphrates basin.

Keywords: hydrology, snow, runoff, climate change, global warming

Öz

Hidrolojik süreçlerin çoğunlukla kar erimesinden etkilendiği kar baskın bölgelerde, kar yağışının yüzey akışına katkısı oldukça önemlidir. Bu çalışmada, Ulusal Havacılık ve Uzay Dairesi'nin küresel hidrolojik model sonuçları ışığında Türkiye'de son 21 yılda kar yağışının yüzey akışına katkısı incelenmiştir. Bu çalışmada, gözlemlenen ve uzaktan algılama ürünlerinin asimile edildiği Global Land Data Assimilation System v2.1 model çıktıları kullanılmıştır. Türkiye'nin son 21 yıldaki kar baskın bölgeleri ortaya çıkarılmış ve kar erimesinin akışa katkısı göstergesi olan alan ağırlıklı ortalama maksimum kar suyu eşdeğerinin akış değerlerine oranı (Rsr) iki ayrı 11 yıllık dönem için hesaplanmıştır (2000-2010, 2011-2021). Bu Rsr değerleri, kar yağışlı bölgelerde azalma olup olmadığını görmek için Türkiye geneline karşılaştırılmıştır. Analiz sonuçlarına göre, kar baskın tüm bölgelerde Rsr değerlerinin düştüğü sonucuna varılmıştır. Yukarı Fırat Havzası gibi yüksek kar yağışı alan bölgelerde son 11 yılda Rsr değerleri yüzde 50'ye varan düşüş göstermiştir.

Anahtar sözcükler: hidroloji, kar, akış, iklim değişikliği, küresel ısınma

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Introduction

Snowpack is highly sensitive to temperature changes. The sensitivity against temperature is more observable by the change of runoff characteristics with respect to the increase in temperature at snow-dominant regions where winter precipitation is dominated by snowfall. In these snow-dominant regions, the decrease in snowfall in the winter season results in a decreasing amount of snowpack that would melt in the spring and summer months. In addition, increasing temperatures accelerates the snow melting, thus can pull back the period of the snow melting by a couple of weeks. Earlier seasonal snowmelt and lesser amount of snowfall considerably reduces the water availability in the summer months when water usage is at its peak. This poses the risk of insufficient reservoir capacities in dry seasons, endangering many water-dependent sectors. Barnett et al. (2005) review some case studies in which some water problems are associated with shifts in the seasonality of runoff, such as possible future reductions in hydroelectric production or severely damaging the fish populations. These kinds of water problems associated with snow losses are monetarily quantified at a trillion dollars level (Sturm et al., 2017).

Variability in the volume and seasonal variation of snowpack is well examined with hydrologic analysis and observational data. For example, Adam et al. (2009) conclude that projected losses in the snowpack and warm-season runoff are linked to warming temperatures in snow-dominated regions. It is observed from the remote sensing data that snow-water equivalent (SWE) values in mountain systems have a negative trend for both the continental scale and mountain systems (Bormann et al., 2018). Analyzes of the timing of snowmelt at the observation stations in the snow-dominated regions show that the peak times of snow-related runoff are shifted to earlier times away from warmer months (Tan et al., 2011; Dudley et al., 2017; Uzun et al., 2021). Jain et al. (2010) use remote sensing data in order to estimate the snowmelt runoff under different warming climate scenarios and find that more snowmelt runoff occurs earlier due to the increased snow melting, although there is not much change in total runoff.

The effect of snowmelt on the runoff is analyzed by a variety of methods, such as the ratio of snowfall to the total precipitation (Barnett et al., 2005), snowfall to total runoff (Barnett et al., 2005), and degree-day approaches (Kayastha & Kayastha, 2020). According to studies of Kang et al. (2014) and Islam et al. (2017) on SWE contribution to runoff generation, significant decreases are found in the ratio of snowmelt contribution to runoff in the snow-dominant regimes.

Türkiye has snow-dominated regions due to the abundance of mountainous areas. Especially in the Eastern Anatolia Region of the country, where the mountainous regions are dense, snowfalls are heavy and the amount of runoff in the warmer months strongly depends on the snowmelt. The effects of climate change on water resources in these regions are investigated in some projection-based studies. For example, according to the study conducted in the Upper Euphrates Basin, which constitutes 50 percent of the Euphrates Basin, snowmelt occurs earlier and the runoff decreases in warmer months as the projected temperature increases in the basin (“Assessment of Climate Change Impacts on Snowmelt and Streamflows Project, 2019). According to a hydrological sensitivity study on another snow-dominated region, Upper Kızılırmak River Basin, the surface runoff decreases in warmer months with the increased temperature (Cevahir, 2019). The relationship between snowmelt and temperature on a regional is examined in such studies in Türkiye (e.g. Yucel et al., 2015). Even though these studies are based on the projections, there is a need for a observation-based study across Türkiye on the change in the contribution of snowmelt to runoff.

The objective of this study is to examine the change in the snowmelt contribution to runoff generation in Türkiye for the last 21 years with the data provided by NASA’s (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) Global Land Data Assimilation System v2.1 (GLDAS v2.1).

Method

NASA’s GLDAS v2.1 provides monthly global hydrological and meteorological data (spatial resolution of 0.25° x 0.25°) forced with a combination of model and observation data from 2000 to present (Beaudoin & Rodell, 2020; Rodell et al., 2004). The more detailed information for the data products are released in NASA website (NASA GES DISC, 2020). Please also see “Readme” document of the GLDAS (Rui & Beaudoin, 2019).

To examine the dependence of the runoff on snowmelt in Türkiye, a ratio of snow contribution to runoff generation (R_{sr}) was quantified for each water year (Déry et al., 2005; Kang et al., 2014). R_{sr} is calculated by (Eqn. 1):

$$R_{sr} = \frac{SWE_{melt}}{\sum_{t=1}^N R_t} \#(1)$$

where R is runoff (mm/day) and N is 365 or 366, depending on whether a given year is a leap year or not. In order to account for the water years, t=1 marks 1 October of the given year. SWE_{melt} is calculated by (Eqn. 2):

$$SWE_{melt} = SWE_{max} - SWE_{min} \#(2)$$

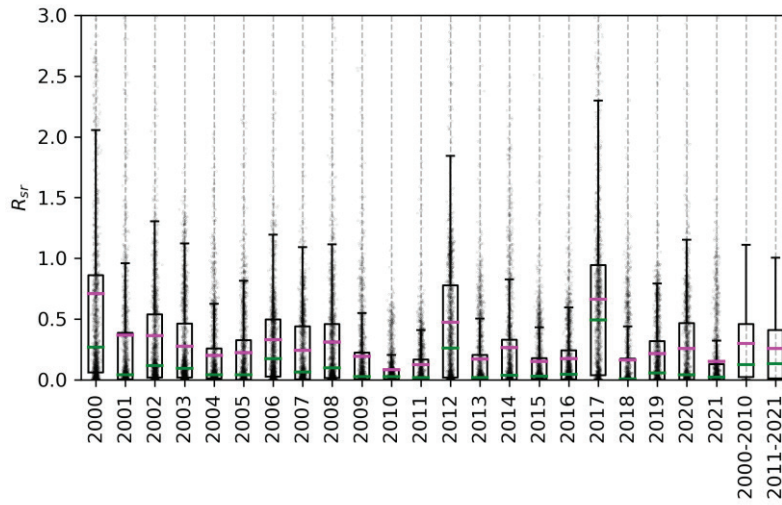
where SWE_{max} is the maximum snow water equivalent of the year, and SWE_{min} is the minimum snow water equivalent of the year. For this study, SWE is 3-hourly instantaneous data, which is given at the end of each 3-hour period. Snow water equivalent and total runoff are the outputs of the dataset from GLDAS v2.1 between 2000 and 2021. In the dataset, SWE is stated as “snow-depth water equivalent” (kg/m^2). Total runoff is the sum of “subsurface runoff” ($\text{kg/m}^2/3\text{hr}$) and “surface runoff” ($\text{kg/m}^2/3\text{hr}$). To compute monthly total runoff, the sum of subsurface runoff ($\text{kg/m}^2/3\text{hr}$) and surface runoff ($\text{kg/m}^2/3\text{hr}$) is multiplied by 240 ($8\{3\text{hr/day}\} * 30\{\text{days}\}$). The years 2000 to 2021 were divided into two 11-year periods. Rsr values were calculated for the years between 2000-2010, and 2011-2021 (including 2000 and 2021).

Results and Discussion

Figure 1 showed the country average of Rsr values calculated for each year between 2000 and 2021 in Türkiye. In Figure 1, small gray dots represented the value in each GLDAS pixel, magenta lines represented the mean values and green lines represented the median values. From Figure 1, it can be seen that apart from the peaks occurring in 2012 and 2017, the Rsr values showed a decrease in the second period (see the comparison of the periods at the bottom-right corner in Figure 1). The Rsr values calculated for the two periods (2000-2010 and 2011-2021) and the comparison of these periods across Türkiye were shown in Figure 2. Figure 3 showed the Rsr values of each basin for two periods. From Figure 2 and 3, generally, Fırat-Dicle (Euphrates – Tigris), Aras (Araks), Çoruh (Chorokhi), Eastern Black Sea Region, around the city of Sivas, which is the upstream of the Kızılırmak Basin and Yeşilirmak, Eastern and Southern parts of the Western Black Sea Basins were the regions where the runoff was heavily fed by snowfall ($Rsr > 0.50$). Conversely, the western side of Türkiye, the western part of the Central Anatolian region, the Aegean and Mediterranean were outside the snow-dominated regions ($Rsr < 0.50$). Rsr values lower than 0.50 were excluded to assess in the current study as the effect of snow on the runoff were negligible.

Figure 1

Box Plot for The Change of Rsr Values of Türkiye-Wide Averages from 2000 to 2021



Note. Magenta lines represent the mean values and green lines represent the median values.

Overall, among the snow-dominated regions, the Rsr values decreased in the upstream regions of the Upper Euphrates, Lake Van, Upper Kızılırmak, Eastern Black Sea, northern parts of Seyhan, and the eastern parts of Tigris basins in the last 11-year period, compared to period of 2000-2010. The decrease in the Rsr values in these regions are also apparent in Figure 3, where there are more scatter points below the diagonal line. The decrease in Rsr is consistent with the results of the climate projections in Türkiye. In the climate change projections of these basins, a quite amount of snowfall will be replaced by rainfall in the future (Climate Change Impacts on Water Resources Project, 2016). Particularly in the Upper Euphrates basin, the decrease in Rsr values of up to 50 percent in the last 11 years is remarkable compared to the first 11-year period. The SWE in these regions, such as the Western and Southern parts of the Palandöken Mountains, Mercan, Tecer and Tahtalı Mountains, decreased in the last 11 years, compared to the first 11-year period (Figure 4 and 5). Rsr values show a decrease in these regions mostly due to decreases in SWE.

Figure 2.a

The Averages of the Rsr Values for the Period of 2000-2010

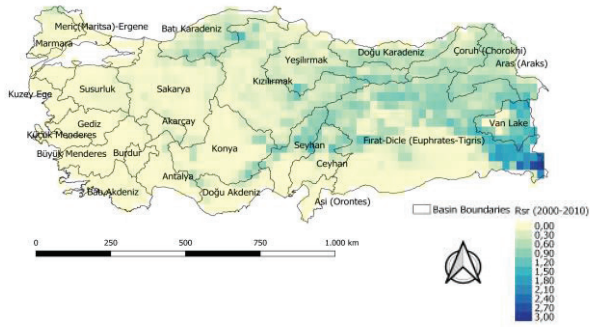


Figure 2.b

The Averages of the Rsr Values for the Period of 2011-2021

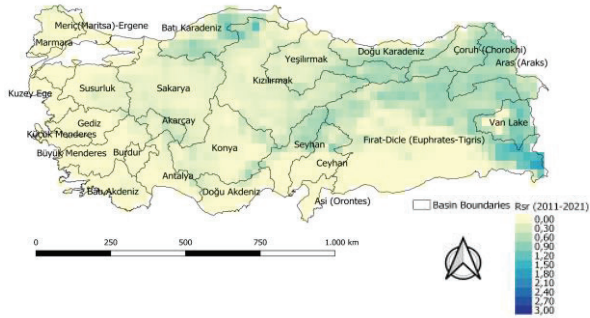


Figure 2.c

The Percentage Change of the Mean Values of Rsr Whose Values Are Greater Than 0.50

Between These Two Periods Across Türkiye

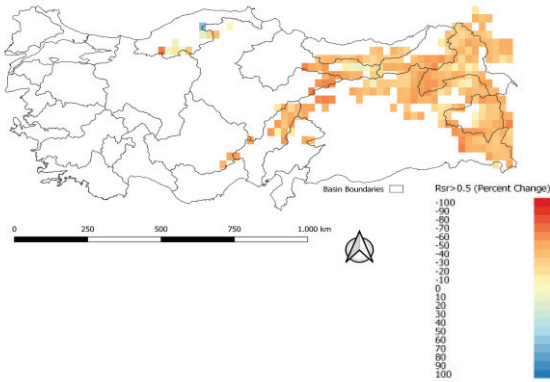
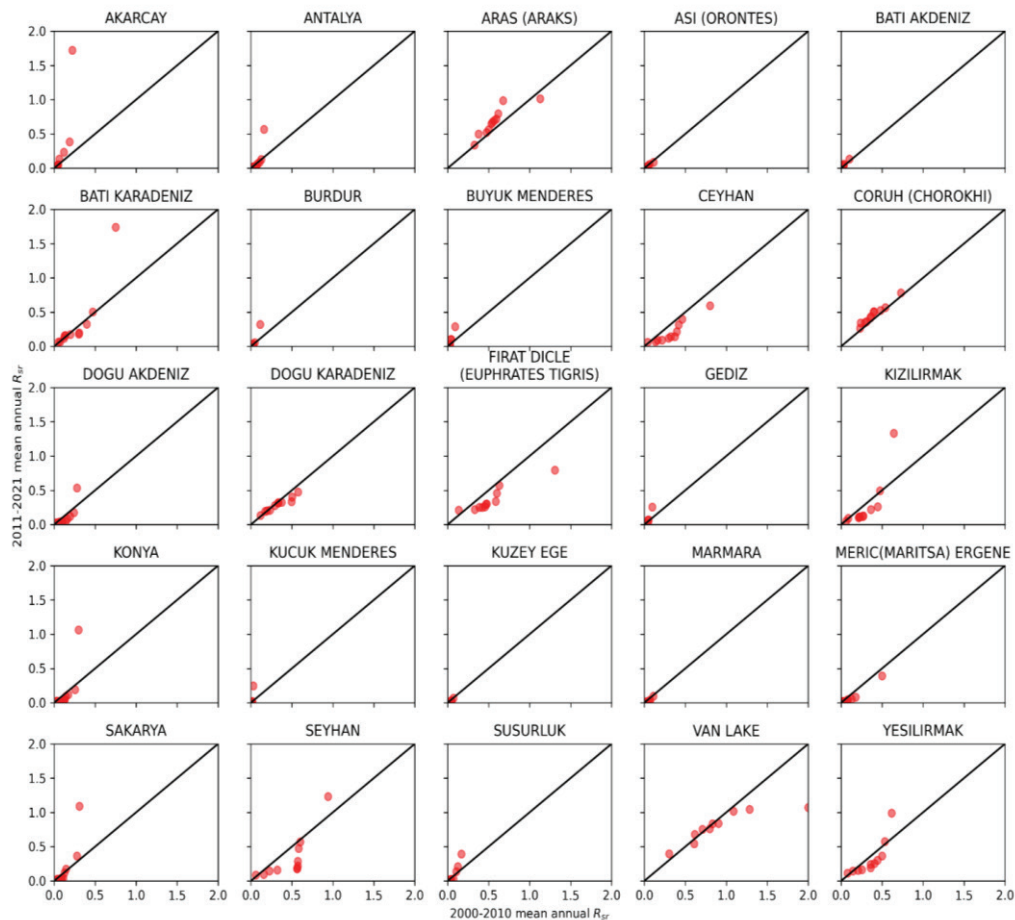


Figure 3

Scatter Plots of Rsr Values Calculated For Both Periods of All Basins in Türkiye



Note. Each dot shows the average Rsr value of each basin for each year (x-axis for the first

10 years, y-axis for the second 10 years). The X axis shows annual average for each year between 2000-2010, and the Y axis shows annual average for each year between 2011-2021.

Figure 4

The Percentage Change of SWE Between the Averages of Period of 2000-2010 and the Averages of Period of 2011-2021 Across Türkiye

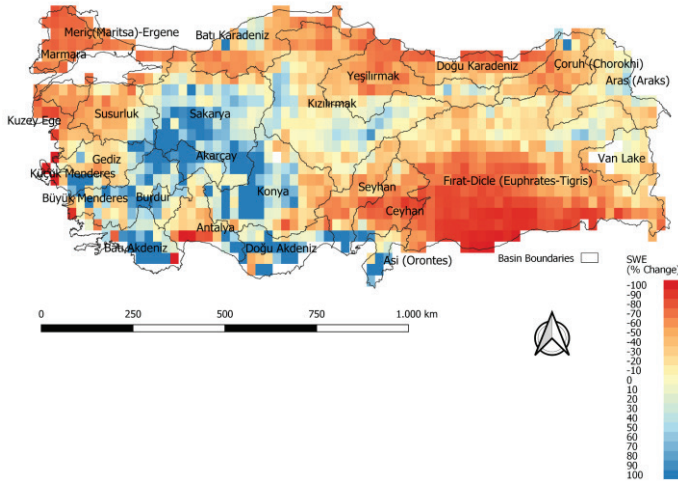
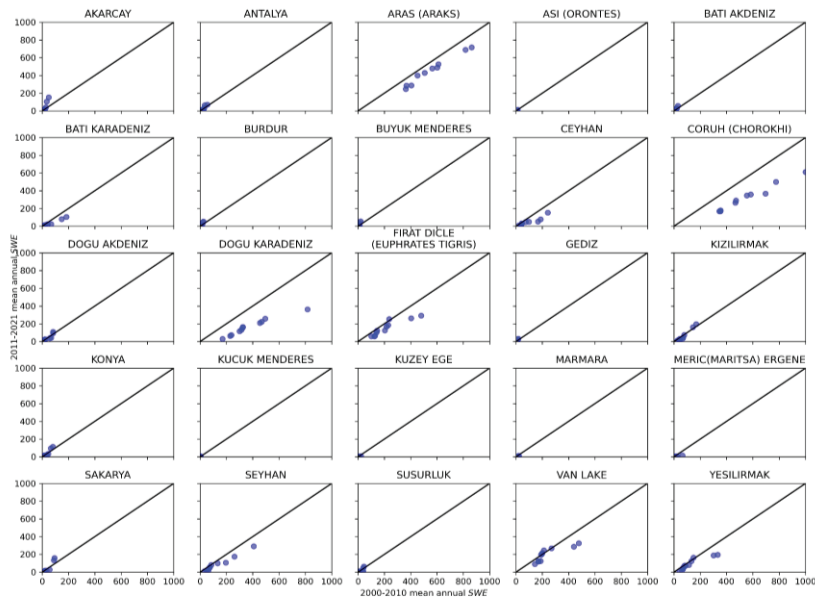


Figure 5

Scatter Plots of SWE (Kg M-2) Values for Both Periods of All Basins in Türkiye



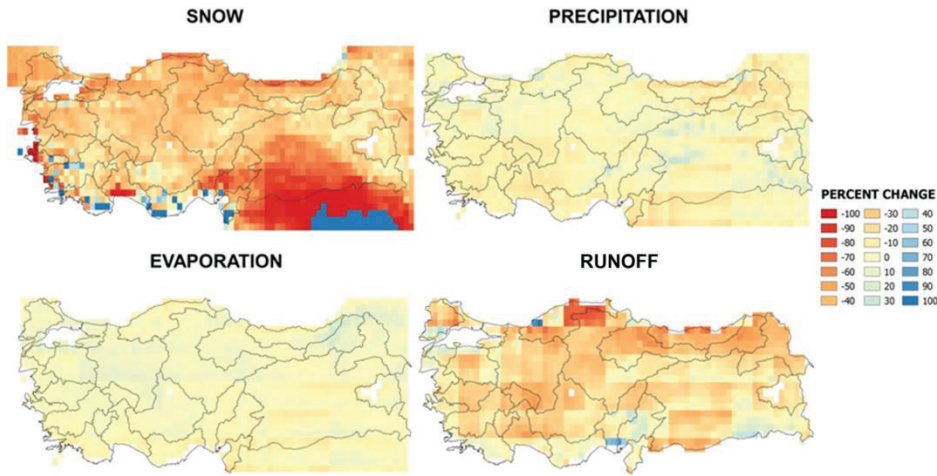
Note. The X axis shows annual average for each year between 2000-2010, and the Y axis shows annual average for each year between 2011-2021.

Additionally, From Figure 6, it is noteworthy that the runoff values decreased significantly (i.e. more than roughly 20 percent fall in the black sea cost) in the last 11-year period for the most parts of Türkiye. The decreases in the runoff values, especially on the western side of the middle of the Black Sea coast, in the Çoruh (Chorokhi), Eastern Black Sea, Yeşilırmak and Western Black Sea Basins, stood out compared to other regions. The decreases amount of runoff in these regions was related to decreases in total precipitation as well as decreases in snow water equivalent. For other basins, such as parts of the Central Anatolian, Aegean and Mediterranean Regions, where mountainous regions are scarce and snow is not dominant form of precipitation, the decreases in the runoff values are due to decreased rainfall or increased evaporation (Figure 6).

The results in the current study, which are mostly in line with the climate projections of the Coupled Model Intercomparison Project 5 (CMIP5) (Taylor et al., 2011) [except for the slightly decreased about 10 percent precipitation trend estimated by the current study in the Eastern Black Sea Region where the amount of precipitation was shown to be a moderate increase at the future projections according to the most Global Climate Models (Demircan et al., 2017)], showed that the water availability in the snow-dominated regions of Türkiye were adversely affected in the last decade compared to earlier period. The decrease in the Rsr values, which has manifested itself in the last 11 years, can be expected to accelerate in the future, where record temperatures have been experienced recently almost every year. Since the energy generation is reliant on snow-fed freshwater resources in the snow-dominated regions of the Fırat (Euphrates), Dicle (Tigris), Eastern Black Sea, Yeşilırmak, and Kızılırmak Basins, the concern of insufficient electricity production may be encountered in the not-too-distant future.

Figure 6

The Percentage Changes of Snow, Precipitation, Evaporation and Runoff Values Between the Averages of These Two Periods Across Türkiye



Conclusion

This study sought to identify the snow-dominated regions in Türkiye with the model outputs data globally shared by NASA GLDAS v2.1 for the last 21 years and to compare the changes in snow contribution to runoff in these regions over 11-year periods. For this purpose, Rsr values for the years 2000 and 2011, and 2011-2021 were calculated and the averages of the Rsr values for these periods were spatially represented in Türkiye. Then, the changes of Rsr values in both periods were also shown and analyzed.

According to the results, in accordance with the climate projections of the CMIP5 (Taylor et al., 2011, p. 5), there has been a decrease in SWE in the most of the snow-dominated regions in the 2011-2021 period compared to the period of 2000-2011. The Rsr values generally decreased in almost all snow-dominated regions. In addition, it has been observed that the runoff decreased in the last 11-year period in the most area of Türkiye, regardless of whether the region is snow-dominated or not. All these results generated based on NASA GLDAS v2.1 model outputs can be seen as another indication for the predictions that there will be insufficient water availability in the future in snow-dominated regions where the hydrological energy potential are high.

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Extended Turkish Abstract
(Geniřletilmiş Türkçe Özet)

Türkiye Genelinde Kar Erimesinin Akıřa Katkıřındaki Deęiřimin İncelenmesi

Kar örtüsü, sıcaklık deęiřimine karřı oldukça hassastır. Kıř yaęıřlarında kar yaęıřlarının hâkim olduęu kar baskın bölgelerde sıcaklıęa karřı duyarlılık, daha fazla gözlemlenebilir. Kar yaęıřının yoğun olduęu bu bölgelerde, artan sıcaklıklarla beraber, kıř mevsiminde kar yaęıřının azalması, ilkbahar ve yaz aylarında eriyecek olan kar miktarının azalmasına neden olur. Ayrıca artan sıcaklıklar karın erimesini hızlandırmakta, dolayısıyla karın erime zamanını daha sıcak aylardan daha soęuk aylara çekebilmektedir. Karların erken erimesi ve daha az kar yaęıřı, su kullanımının en yoğun olduęu yaz aylarında su miktarını önemli ölçüde azaltır. Bu durum, kurak mevsimlerde yetersiz rezervuar kapasitesi riskini ortaya çıkararak suya baęımlı birçoę sektörü tehlikeye atmaktadır. Bu konuda yapılan çalışmalar göstermektedir ki bazı suya baęlı sorunlar (gelecekte hidroelektrik üretiminde olası azalmalar veya balık popülasyonlarına ciddi zararlar gibi) akıntının mevsimsellięindeki deęiřimlerle iliřkilidir ve kar kayıplarıyla iliřkilendirilen bu tür su sorunları, maddi olarak trilyon dolar düzeyinde öęlmemektedir.

Türkiye’de daęlık alanların bol olması nedeniyle yoğun kar yaęıřı alan birçoę bölge bulunmaktadır. Özellikle daęlık bölgelerin yoğun olduęu Doęu Anadolu Bölgesi bol kar yaęıřı alır ve sıcak aylardaki yüzeysel akıř miktarı kıř aylarında yaęan karların erimesine baęlıdır. İklim deęiřiklięinin bu bölgelerdeki su kaynakları üzerindeki etkileri bazı projeksiyon tabanlı çalışmalarla araştırılmıřtır. Örneęin, Fırat Havzasının yüzde 50’sini oluřturan Yukarı Fırat Havzasında Su Yönetimi Genel Müdürlüęü’nce yürütölmüř olan İklim Deęiřiklięinin Kar Erimelerine Etkisinin Belirlenmesi Projesine göre, havzada öngörölenin üzerinde sıcaklık arttıkaça kar erimesi daha erken gerçekleřmekte ve sıcak aylarda yüzeysel akıřı azalmaktadır. Dięer bir kar yaęıřlı bölge olan Yukarı Kızılırmak Havzasında, sıcak aylarda artan sıcaklıkla birlikte yüzeysel akıřı azalmaktadır. Bu çalışmalar, projeksiyon tabanlı çalışmalar olduklarından, son 21 yılda kar erimesinin akıřa katkıřının deęiřimi konusunda Türkiye genelinde gözleme dayalı bir çalışmaya ihtiyaç duyulmuřtur. Kar erimesinin akıř üzerindeki etkisi, kar yaęıřının toplam yaęıřa oranı, kar yaęıřlarının toplam akıřa oranı ve derece-gün yaklařımları gibi çeřitli yöntemlerle analiz edilmiř ve bu yöntemler kullanılarak yapılan çalışmalarda Kar-su eřdeęerinin (KSE) yüzeysel akıř oluřumuna katkıřında önemli düşüřlerin olduęu görölmüřtür.

Bu çalışmada, NASA’nın son 21 yıldan günümüze deęin küresel olarak paylařtıęı ve uzaktan algılama ve dięer verilerin girdi olarak kullanıldıęı Küresel Hidrolojik Model (GLDAS v2.1) çıktıları kullanılarak Türkiye’deki kar baskın bölgeler belirlenmiř ve bu bölgelerde karın yüzeysel akıřına katkıřındaki deęiřim, 11 yıllık iki dönem halinde karřılařtırılmıřtır. Bu amaçla, 2000-2010 ve 2011-2021 periyotları için Kar Erimesinin Yüzeysel Akıřına Oranı (Rsr) deęerleri hesaplanmıř ve bu dönemlere ait Rsr deęerlerinin ortalamaları Türkiye üzerinde mekânsal olarak temsil edilmiřtir. Daha sonra Rsr deęerlerinin her iki dönemdeki deęiřimleri de gösterilmiř ve analiz edilmiřtir.

Genel olarak, hesaplanan Rsr deęerlerine göre, Fırat-Dicle, Aras, Çoruh, Doęu Karadeniz Bölgesi, Sivas ili çevresinde Kızılırmak havzasının membaşı ile Yeřilirmak, Doęu ve Batı Karadeniz Havzalarının güney kısımları, yüzeysel akıřının yoğun olarak kar yaęıřıyla beslendięi bölgelerdir (Rsr >0.50). Buna karřılık, Türkiye’nin batısı, İç Anadolu bölgesinin batısı, Ege ve Akdeniz kar yaęıřlı bölgelerin dıřındadır (Rsr<0.50). Rsr deęerleri 0,50’den düşük ise karın akıř üzerindeki etkisi ihmal edilebilir düzeyde demek olduęundan bu çalışmada deęerlendirilme dıřında tutulmuřtur.

Rsr deęerleri hemen hemen tm kar yaęıřlı blgelerde azalmaktadır. Kar yaęıřlı blgelerden Yukarı Fırat, Van Gl, Yukarı Kızılırmak, Doęu Karadeniz, Seyhan'ın kuzeyi ve Dicle havzalarının doęu kesimlerinde son 11 yıllık (2011-2021) dnemde Rsr deęerleri ilk 11 yıllık (2000-2010) dneme gre azalmıřtır. zellikle Yukarı Fırat ve Van Gl Havzalarında son 11 yılda Rsr deęerlerinde yzde 50'ye varan dřř, dięer blgelere nazaran dikkat çekicidir. Benzer Őekilde, 2011-2021 dneminde kar yaęıřlı blgelerin çoęunda 2000-2011 dneminde gre KSE'de kayda deęer bir azalma olmuřtur. Palandken Daęları'nın batı ve gney kesimleri, Mercan, Tecer ve Tahtalı Daęları gibi blgelerde KSE, ilk 11 yıllık dneme gre son 11 yılda dikkate deęer Őekilde azalmıřtır. Bu blgelerde Rsr deęerleri daha çok KSE'deki azalıřlara baęlı olarak dřř gstermektedir.

Bir bařka vurgulanması gereken nokta olarak, blgenin karla kaplı olup olmamasına bakılmaksızın, Trkiye'nin çoęunda son 11 yıllık dnemde yzeysel akıř oranlarının azaldıęının gzlenmesi ifade edilebilir. zellikle Orta Karadeniz kıyısının batı yakasında, oruh, Doęu Karadeniz, Yeřilirmak ve Batı Karadeniz havzalarında akıřtaki azalma dięer blgelere gre dikkatle izlenmeyi gerektirmektedir. Bu blgelerdeki akıřtaki azalmalar, toplam yaęıřtaki azalmaların yanı sıra kar suyu eřdeęerindeki azalmalarla da ilgilidir. İ Anadolu, Ege ve Akdeniz Blgeleri gibi daęlık blgelerin az olduęu ve karın hkim olmadıęı dięer havzalarda ise yaęıřların azalması veya buharlařmanın artmasından kaynaklanmaktadır.

5. Birleřik Model Karřılařtırma Projesi (CMIP5) ve Su Ynetimi Genel Mdrlęnn yrtmř olduęu ‘‘Su Kaynaklarında İklım Deęiřiklięine Uyum’’ projesinin iklim projeksiyonları ile uyumlu olan mevcut alıřmanın sonularına gre, ime suyu iin kar yaęıřına yksek oranda baęımlı olan Trkiye'nin kar yaęıřlı blgelerinde su mevcudiyeti iklim deęiřiklięinden olumsuz etkilenmeye bařlamıřtır. Son 11 yılda Rsr deęerlerindeki dřřn, son yıllarda neredeyse rekor sıcaklıkların yařandıęı Trkiye'de gelecekte daha da hızlanması beklenebilir. Fırat, Dicle, Doęu Karadeniz, Yeřilirmak ve Kızılırmak Havzalarının karla kaplı blgelerinin yksek enerji retimli blgeler olduęu dřnldęnde, su yeterince mevcut olmadıęında enerji retimi sorunlarının ok uzak olmayan bir gelecekte tecrbe edileceęi ařıkardır.