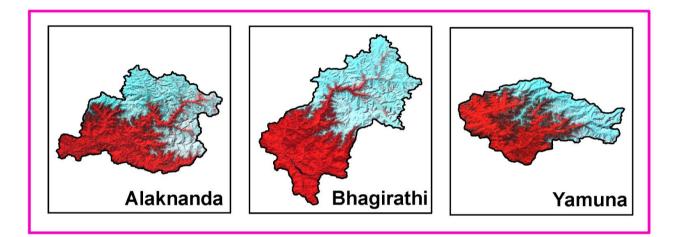
SNOW COVER ATLAS OF THE GANGA BASIN

Sub-basins: Alaknanda, Bhagirathi, and Yamuna

(Integrated Studies of Himalayan Cryosphere

A Project of Indian Space Research Organisation)

Year 2015-2016





Prepared by Space Applications Centre (ISRO) Ahmedabad-380015

May, 2017

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Abstract	This atlas gives sub-basin-wise distribution of snow cover in the Ganga basin from October 2015 to June 2016. The sub-basins included in this report are Alaknanda, Bhagirathi and Yamuna. The areal extent of snow cover was estimated in fully automatic mode using Normalized Difference Snow Index (NDSI) based algorithm. For this purpose, AWiFS sensor of Resourcesat satellite was used. This atlas gives snow cover products, statistics and seasonal snow depletion curve. It is expected that this data will be useful for hydrological and climatological applications.		
Key words	Snow cover, NDSI, AWiFS, depletion curve, Alaknanda, Bhagirathi and Yamuna basins.		
Security Classification	Unrestricted		
Distribution	Among concerned		

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1. Introduction

Snow covers almost 40 per cent of the Earth's land surface during Northern Hemisphere winter. This makes albedo and areal extent of snow as important component of the Earth's radiation balance (Foster and Chang, 1993). In addition, large areas in the Himalayas are also covered by snow during winter. Area of snow can change significantly during winter and spring. This can affect stream flow for rivers originating in the higher Himalayas. All the rivers originating from higher Himalayas receive almost 30-50 % of annual flow from snow and glacier melt run off (Agarwal et al., 1983). In addition, snow pack ablation is highly sensitive to climatic variation. Increase in atmospheric temperature can influence snowmelt and stream runoff pattern (Kulkarni et al., 2002). Therefore, mapping of the areal extent and reflectance of snow are important parameter for various climatological and hydrological applications. In addition, extent of snow cover can also be used as input for numerous other applications.

Mapping and monitoring of seasonal snow cover using field methods are normally very difficult in a mountainous terrain, like the Himalayas. Therefore, remote sensing techniques have been extensively used for snow cover monitoring. Snow cover monitoring using satellite images were started by using the TIROS-1 satellite from April 1960 (Singer and Popham 1963). Since then, the potential for operational satellite-based mapping has been enhanced by the development of higher temporal frequency and satellite sensors with higher spatial resolution. In addition, satellites with better radiometric resolutions, such as NOAA have been used successfully for snow mapping (Hall et al., 1995). This is possibly due to the distinct spectral reflectance characteristics of snow in visible and near infrared regions. India has launched series of Indian Remote Sensing satellite (IRS) to study the different earth resources. Previously launched satellites have flown with many sensors having different spatial, temporal and spectral resolutions. Recently launched RESOURCESAT-1 satellite has three different sensors namely LISS III, LISS IV & AWiFS with different spatial, temporal and spectral resolutions as desired for different applications. AWiFS (Advanced Wide Field Sensor) is an advanced version of earlier Indian satellite sensor WiFS (Wide Field Sensor) with improved spectral and spatial resolutions maintaining the same repetivity. There are a series of other polar orbiting satellites, like Landsat, NOAA and MODIS etc., which have provided information on different aspects of snow. Geo-stationary satellites also proved their utility in mapping/monitoring the snow-covered regions. Information generated from satellite observations has been extensively used for snowmelt runoff modeling (Kulkarni et al., 1997).

2. Study Area:

This Atlas gives distribution of snow cover in three sub-basins of the Ganga basin. These are Alaknanda, Bhagirathi and Yamuna sub basins. Locations of these basins are shown in Figure 1.

3. Data used:

AWiFS data from October 2015 to June 2016 were used in this study.

4. Normalised Difference Snow Index (NDSI):

In general, the reflectance of snow is high at the red end of the visible spectrum. It tends to decline in the near-infrared region until 1090 nm, where slight gain in reflectance occurs and gives a minor peak at approximately 1090 to 1100 nm. One of the important difficulties in snow cover monitoring is the presence of cloud cover. Cloud has strong reflectivity in visible, NIR and SWIR regions while snow absorbs in SWIR, and this difference can be utilized for snow/cloud discrimination. Normalized Difference Snow Index (NDSI) utilize the normalized ratio of green and SWIR and is used as an automated approach for snow mapping addressing the shadow and cloud problems in snow bound areas.

Normalized Difference Snow Index was calculated using the ratio of green wavelength (band 2) and SWIR (band 5) of AWiFS sensor:

$$Normalized Difference SnowIndex(NDSI) = (band2 - band5)/(band2 + band5)$$
 ..(1)

To estimate NDSI, DN numbers were converted into reflectance. This involves conversion of digital numbers into the radiance values, known as sensor calibration, and then estimation of

reflectance from these radiance values. Various parameters needed for estimating spectral reflectance are maximum and minimum radiances and mean solar exo-atmospheric spectral irradiances in the satellite sensor bands, satellite data acquisition time, solar declination, solar zenith and solar azimuth angles, mean Earth-Sun distance etc. (Markham and Barker, 1987; Srinivasulu and Kulkarni, 2004).

5. Snow cover monitoring algorithm

An algorithm is developed to provide changes in the areal extent of snow (Kulkarni et. al., 2006). Snow extent is estimated at an interval of 5-days and 10-days, depending upon availabilities of AWiFS data. In 5-daily product, snow extent is generated scene-wise. In this product, snow and cloud extents are given. Estimate of cloud is important because, at times, snow is covered by cloud and this may be classified as non-snow area, leading to erroneous conclusions. In 10-daily product, three scenes are analyzed, if available. For example, 10 March product data of 5, 10 and 15 March was used. If any pixel is identified as snow on any one date then this pixel will be classified as snow on final product. This provides snow cover at an interval of 10 days, an important requirement in hydrological applications. Therefore, this product is generated basinwise. Since this product is using three scenes, probability becomes high that at least in one scene, pixel may be cloud-free and this helps in overcoming problem associated with snow under cloud cover. If three consecutive scenes are not available, then all available scenes in 10 days window was used in the analysis. Differentiation between water and snow is difficult using NDSI image. In addition, separation of snow and water pixels is also difficult based on reflectance due to mountain shadow. Therefore, in the present algorithm, water bodies are marked in pre-winter season and are masked in the final products during winter. Flow diagram of the algorithm is given in Figure 2.

6. Results and discussions

In this atlas, basin-wise snow cover statistics, maps, and seasonal depletion curves have been provided from October 2015 to June 2016. Snow ablation pattern varies from basin to basin, depending on area altitude distribution in the basins. From October to December there was not much snow fall was observed, accumulation starts from November and melting was observed from till first week of December in all the three sub-basins. Again accumulation starts from mid of January till March end. Maximum snow cover was observed in the month of February in all the three sub-basins. Yamuna sub-basin ablation starts in early March. Fluctuation in snow cover was more in Yamuna sub-basin. It may be due to lower altitude.

Acknowledgements

This investigation was carried out under Integrated studies of Himalayan Cryosphere, at Space Applications Centre (ISRO), Ahmedabad. The authors are grateful to Shri Tapan Misra, Director, Space Applications Centre, Ahmedabad for continuous guidance and encouragement during the investigation. Authors would like to thank Dr. Rajkumar Deputy Director, EPSA, SAC for their suggestions and comments on the manuscript.

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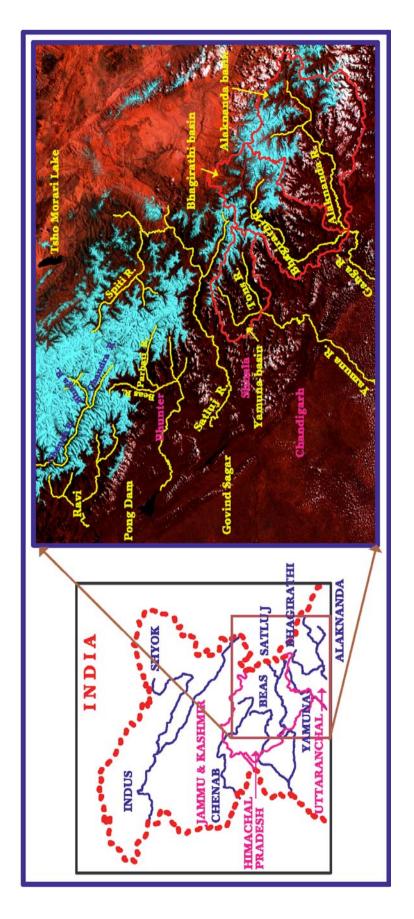


Figure 1: Location map of Alaknanda, Bhagirathi and Yamuna sub-basins (Part of Ganga basin)

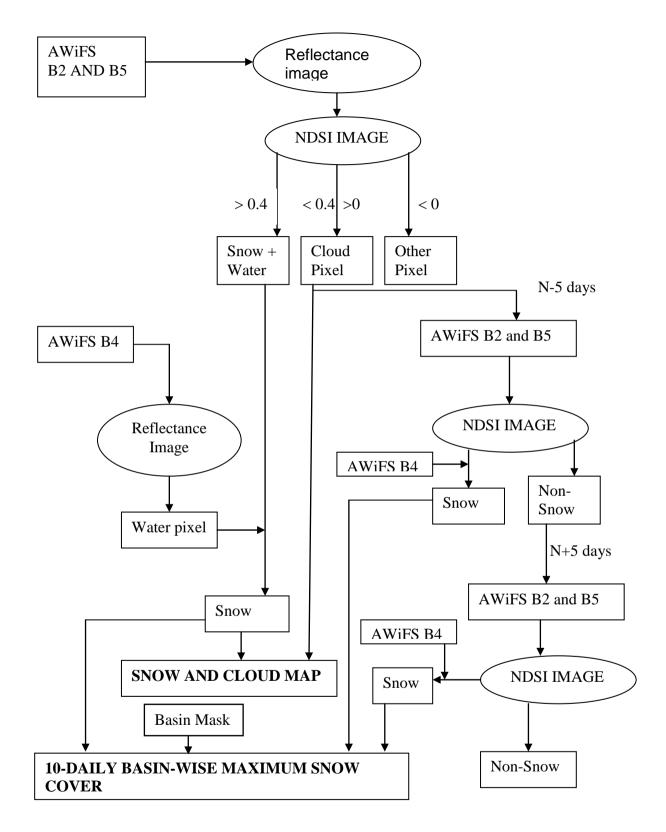


Figure 2: Algorithm for snow cover mapping using AWiFS data

ALAKNANDA SUB-BASIN

AREAL EXTENT OF SNOW (5 DAILY)

BASIN NAME: ALAKNANDA

BASIN AREA: 11090 sq km

S No	Date	Snow cover (sq km)	Snow cover (%)	S No	Date	Snow cover (sq km)	Snow cover (%)	
	·		Octobe	er 2015	·			
1	04-Oct-2015	1035 (C)	9					
November 2015								
2	02-Nov-2015	1405(C)	13	3	07-Nov-2015	2094	19	
	December 2015							
4	01-Dec-2015	1630	15	7	13-Dec-2015	3707	33	
5	05-Dec-2015	1335	12	8	20-Dec-2015	3278	30	
6	10-Dec-2015	1352(C)	12	9				
January 2016								
10	13-Jan-2016	2425 (C)	22	11	27-Jan-2016	2913 (C)	26	
			Februa	ry 2016				
12	01-Feb-2016	3783	34	14	08-Feb-2016	6072	55	
13	03-Feb-2016	3161	29	15	27-Feb-2016	3953 (C)	36	
			Marcl	n 2016	1	1	1	
16	01-Mar-2016	4045	36	18	22-Mar-2016	4963	45	
17	03-Mar-2016	3785	34					
			April	2016				
19	03-April-2016	4027	36	22	23-April-2016	3942 (C)	36	
20	13-April-2016	3893	35	23	27-April-2016	2530 (C)	23	
21	20-April-2016	3513 (C)	32	24	30-April-2016	3340	30	
			May 2016					
25	02-May-2016	3173	29	27	31-May-2016	1755 (C)	16	
26	19-May-2016	1707 (C)	15					
			June	2016				
28	05-June-2016	1220 (C)	11	30	24-June-2016	760 (C)	7	
29	19-June-2016	748 (C)	7	31	29-June-2016	821	7	
	•				•	•	•	

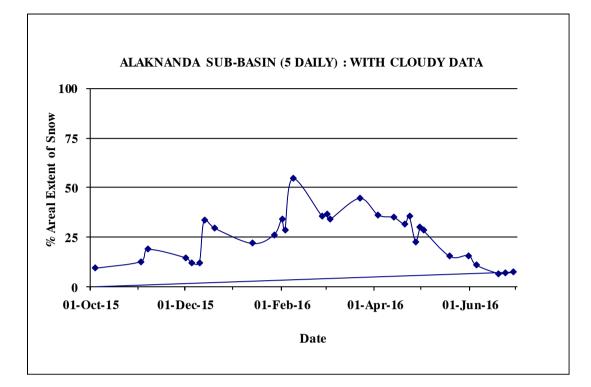
AREAL EXTENT OF SNOW (10 DAILY)

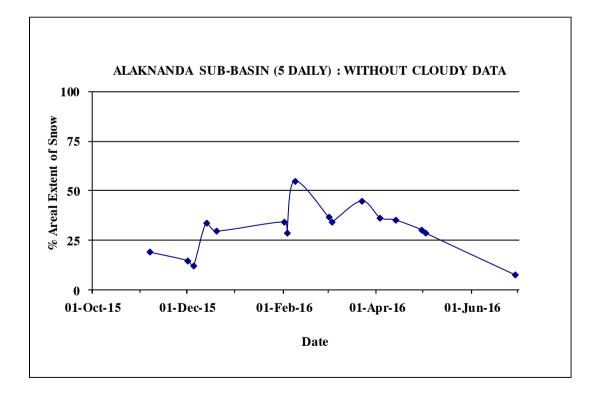
BASIN NAME: ALAKNANDA

BASIN AREA: 11090 sq km

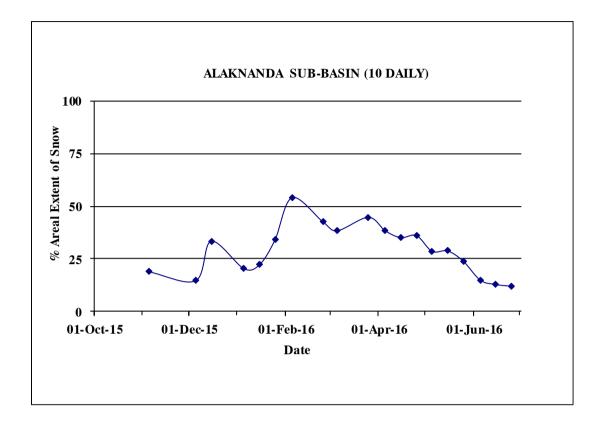
S. No	Date	Snow cover (sq km)	Snow cover (%)	S No	Date	Snow cover (sq km)	Snow cover (%)		
October 2015									
	November 2015								
1	05-Nov-2015	2095	19						
December 2015									
2	05-Dec-2015	1631	15	3	15-Dec-2015	3706	33		
January 2016									
4	05-Jan-2016	2266	20	5	25-Jan-2016	3770	34		
	15-Jan-2016	2464	22						
	·		Februa	ry 2016			·		
6	05-Feb-2016	5998	54	7	25-Feb-2016	4710	42		
	March 2016								
8	05-Mar-2016	4254	38	9	25-Mar-2016	4963	45		
			April	2016					
10	5-Apr-2016	4249	38	12	25-Apr-2016	4002	36		
11	15-Apr-2016	3893	35						
			May	2016					
13	05-May-16	3175	29	15	25-May-16	2661	24		
14	15-May-16	3195	29						
	• •		June	2016	1				
16	05-June-16	1659	15	18	25-June-2016	1339	12		
17	15-June-16	1429	13						

SNOW COVER DEPLETION CURVE

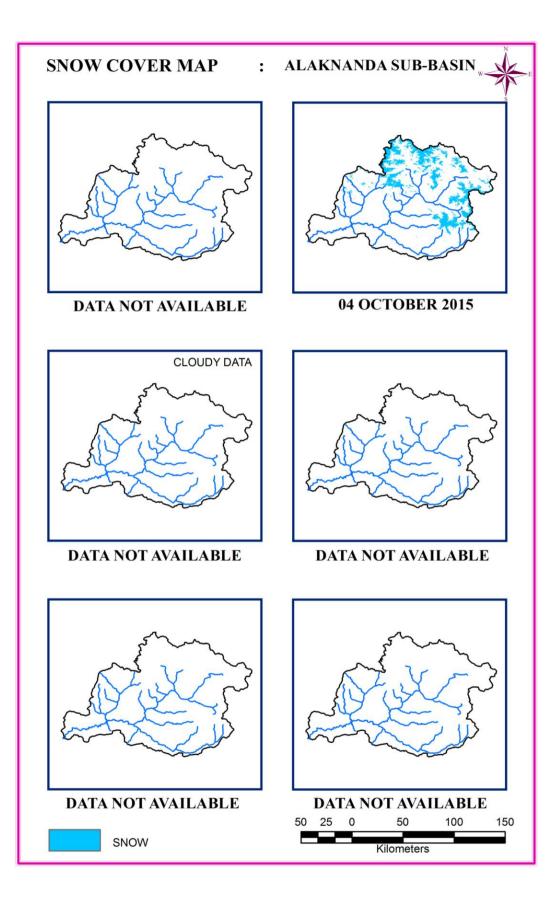


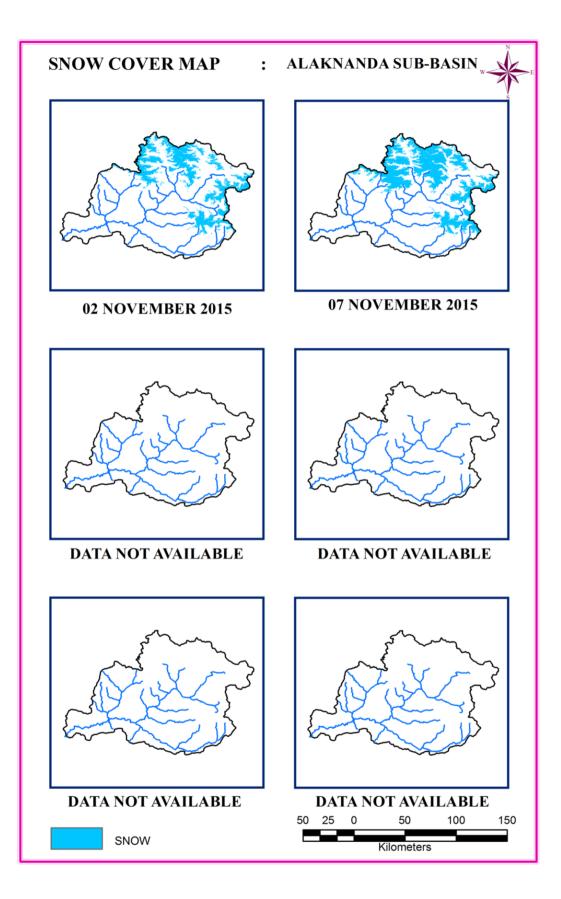


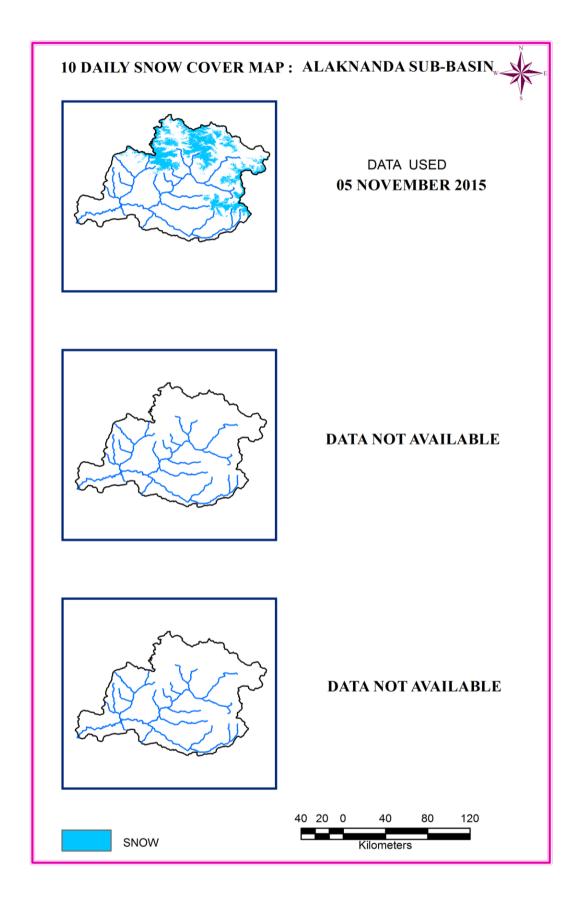
SNOW COVER DEPLETION CURVE

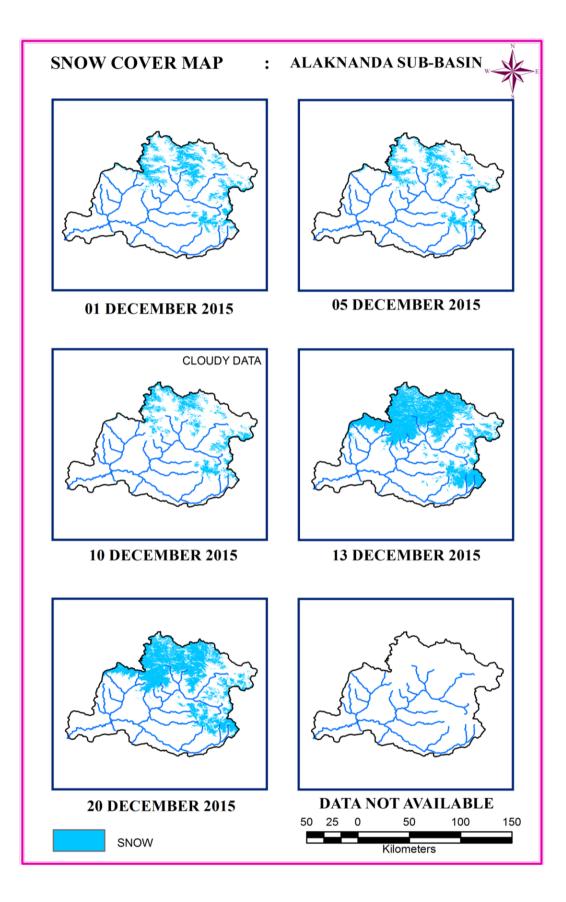


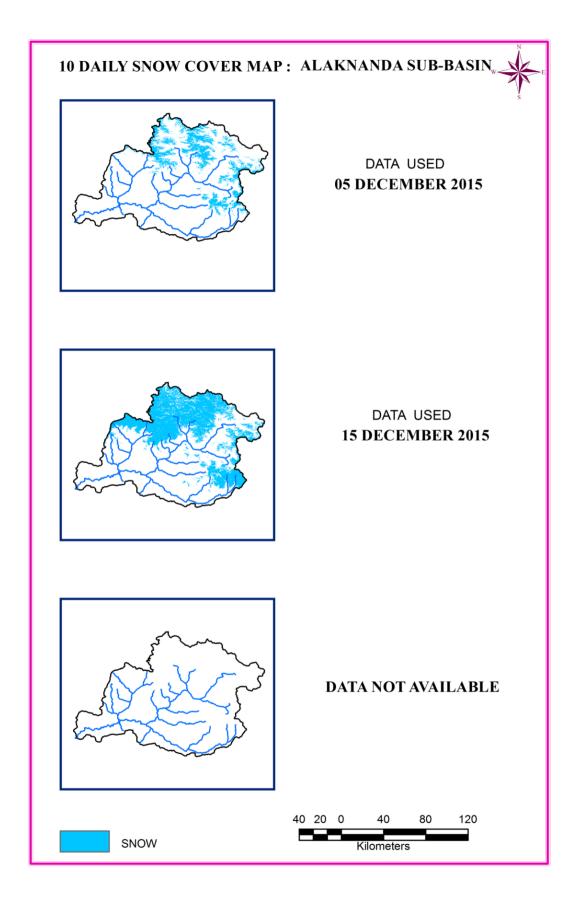
SNOW COVER MAP

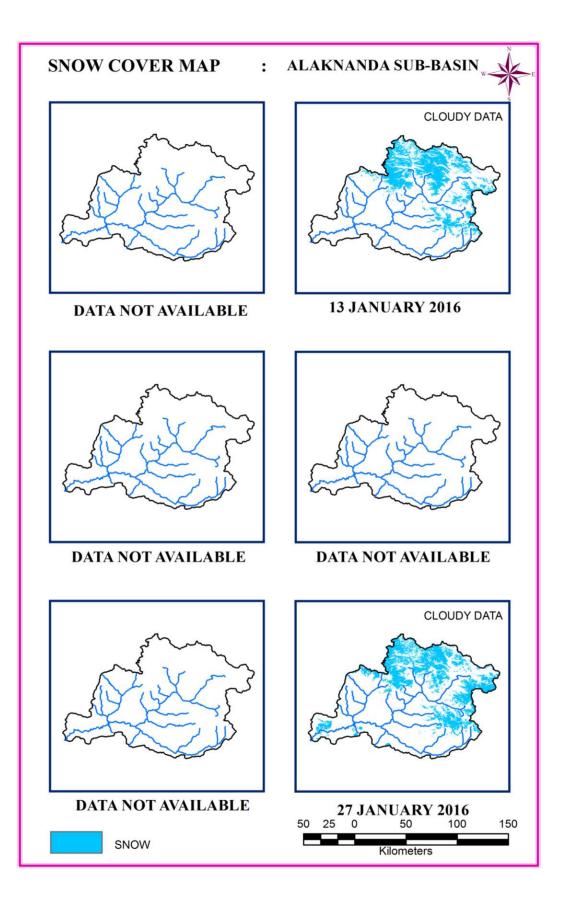


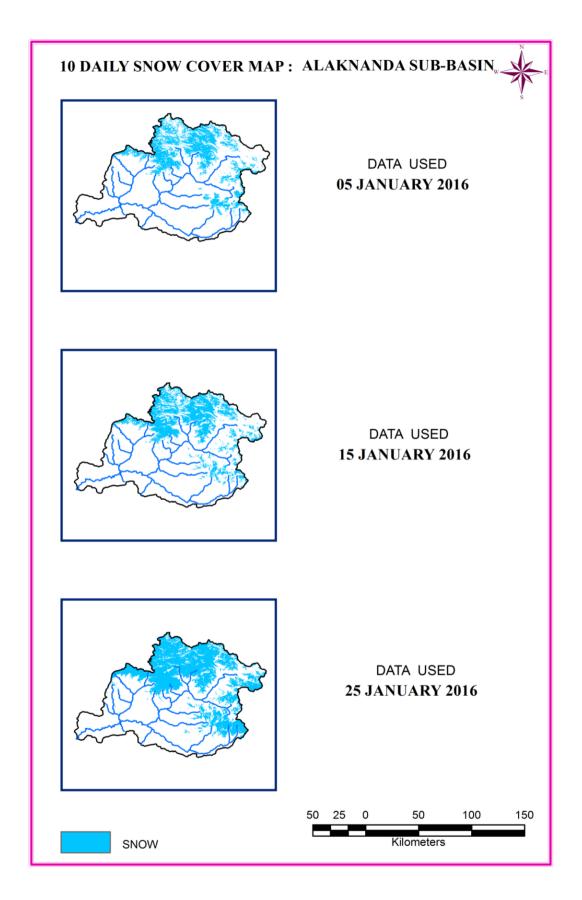


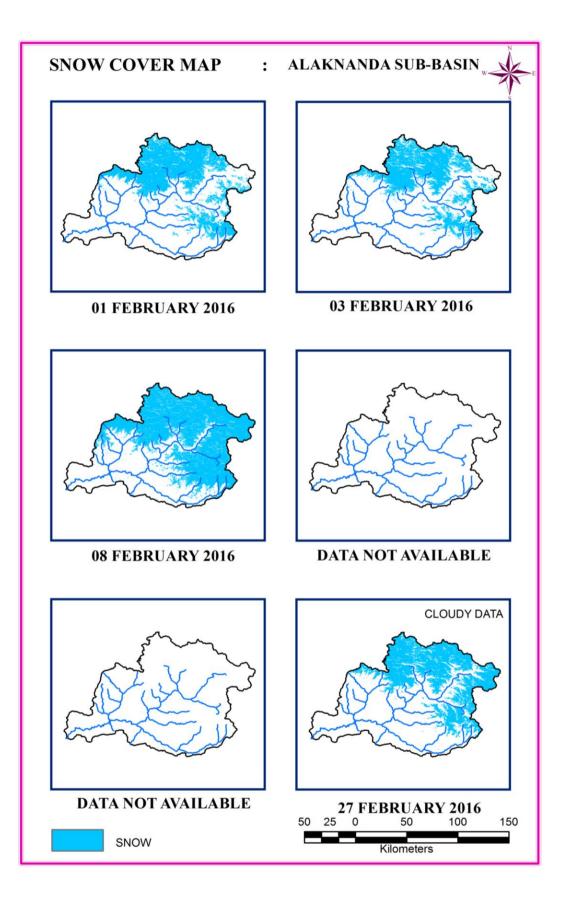


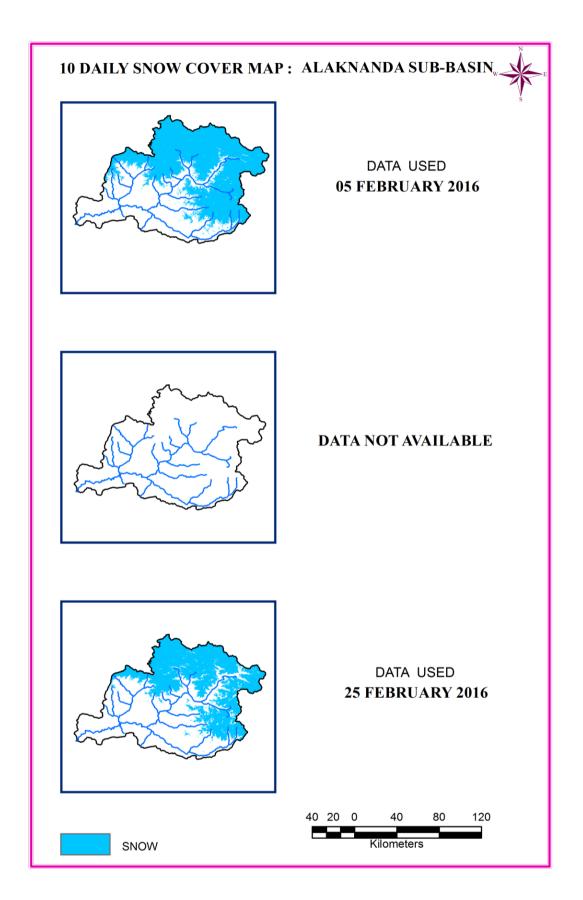


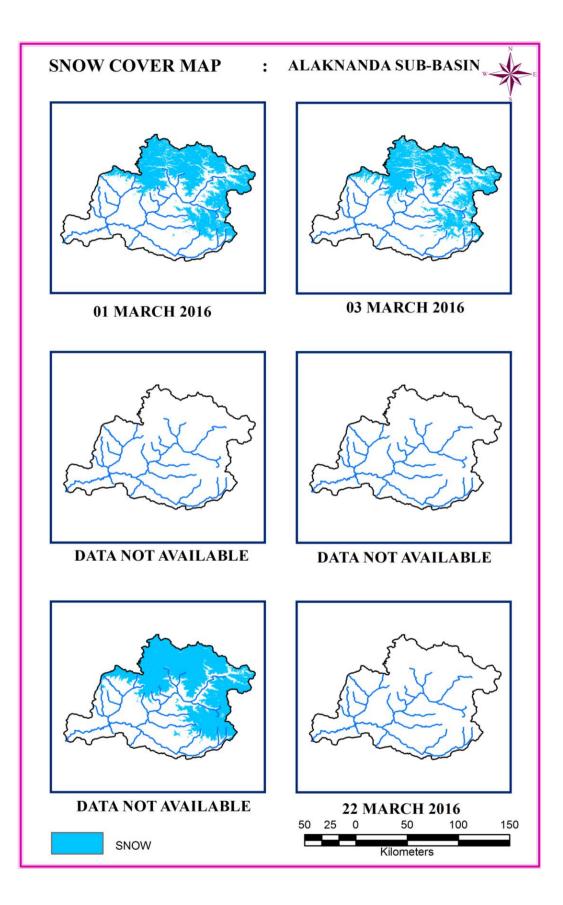


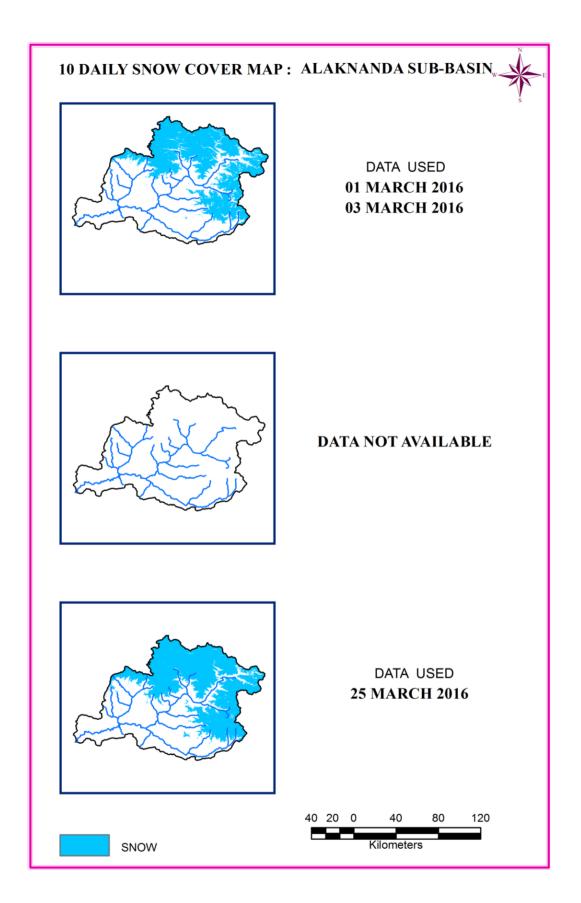


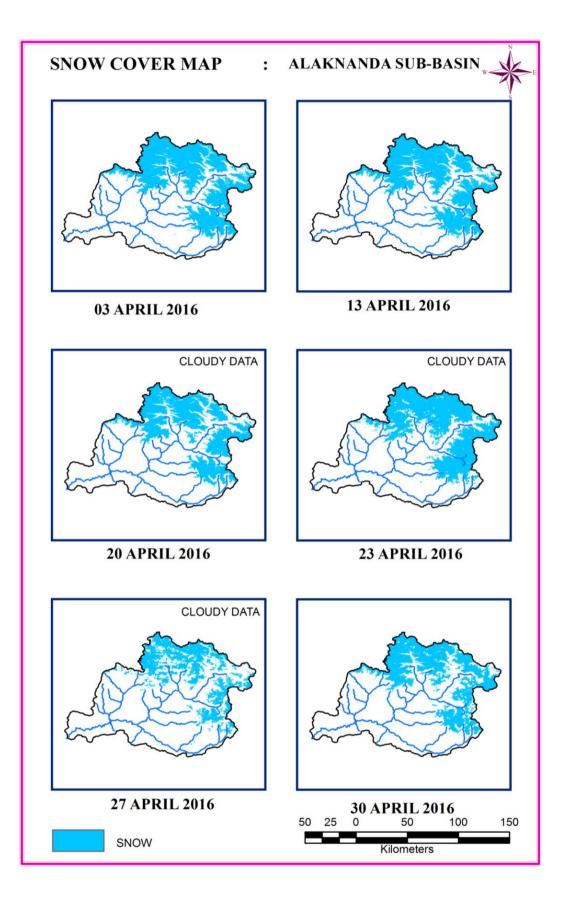


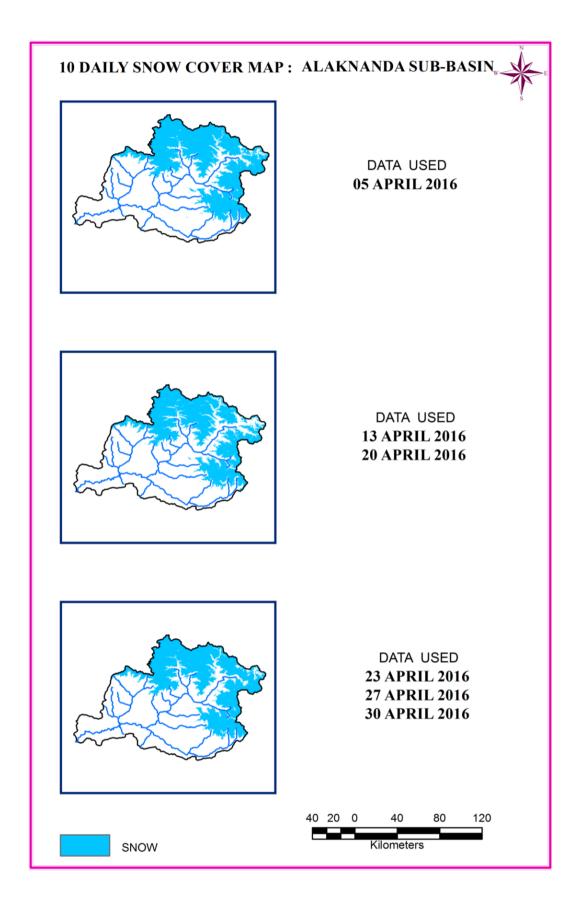


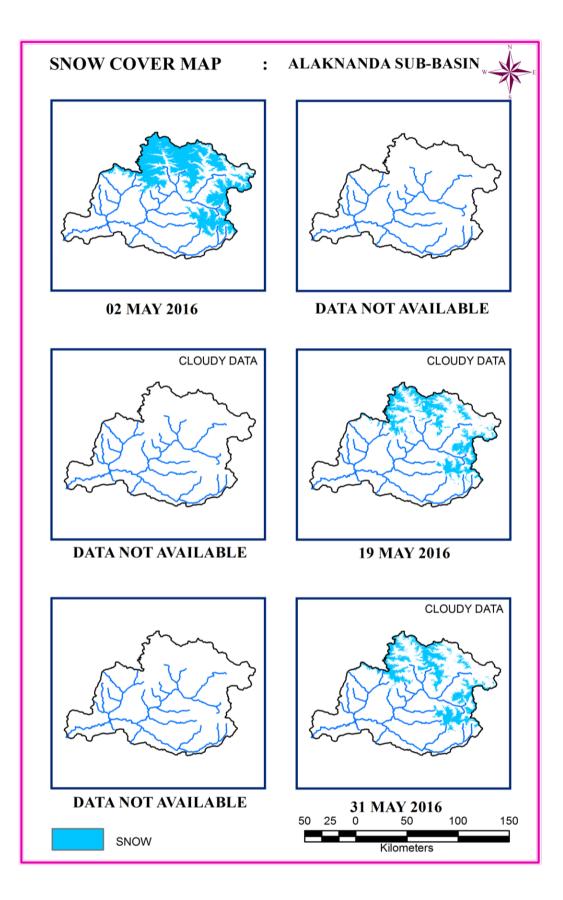


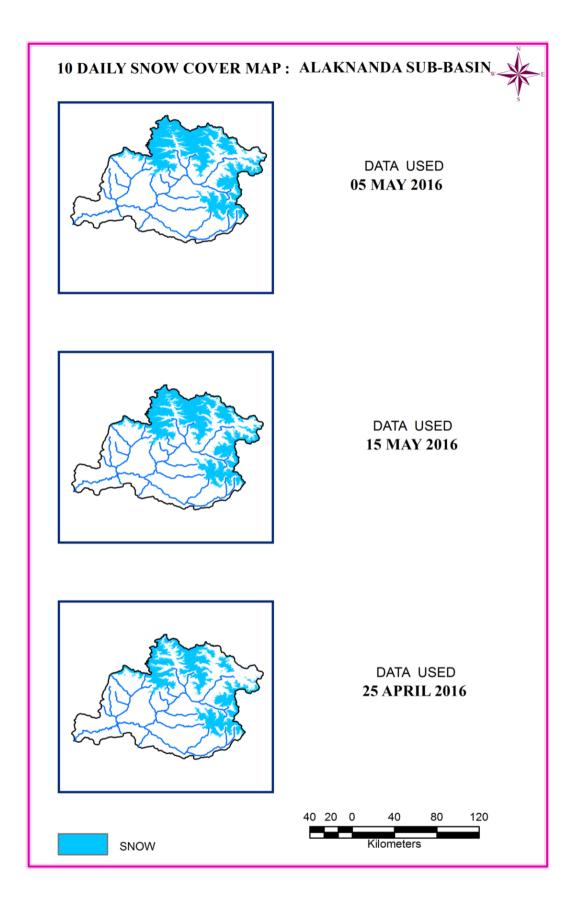


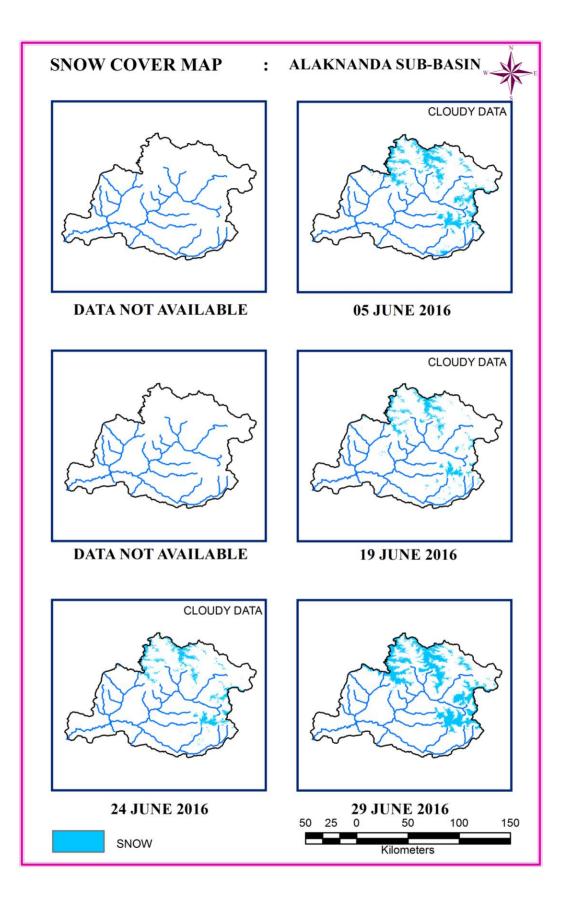


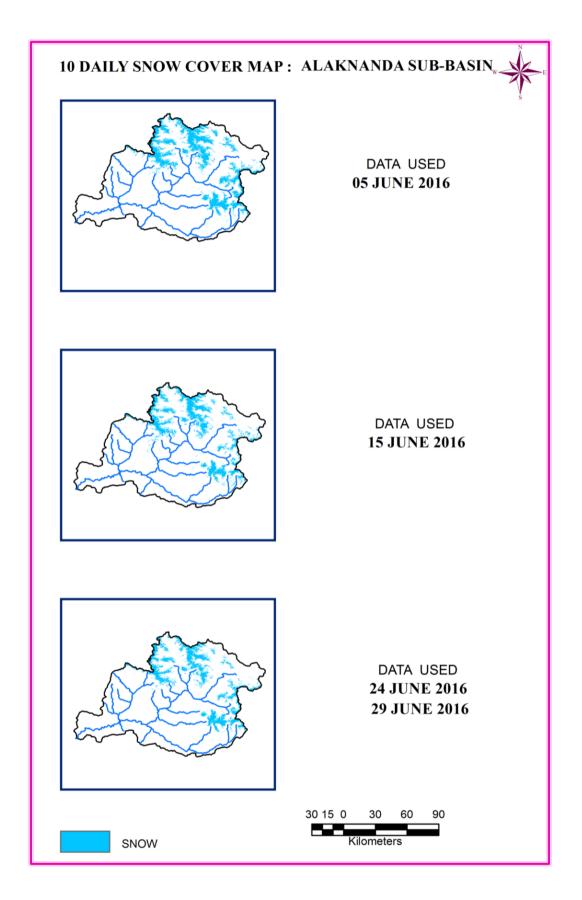












BHAGIRATHI SUB-BASIN

AREAL EXTENT OF SNOW (5 DAILY)

BASIN NAME: BHAGIRATHI

BASIN AREA: 7438 sq km

3 02-N 4 06-N 6 01-I 7 05-I 8 10-I 11 03-X 12 06-X 15 01-I 16 03-I 17 08-I 20 01-N 21 03-N 23 03-A	Nov-15 Nov-15 Dec-15 Dec-15 Dec-15	04-Oct-15 02-Nov-15 06-Nov-15 01-Dec-15 05-Dec-15 10-Dec-15	(sq km) 1011 971 1548 1111	(%) Octobe 14 Novemb 13 21 Decemb	2	30-Oct-15 07-Nov-15	(sq km) 1114 1073	(%) 15 14
3 02-N 4 06-N 6 01-I 7 05-I 8 10-I 11 03-X 12 06-X 15 01-I 16 03-I 17 08-I 20 01-N 21 03-N 23 03-A	Nov-15 Nov-15 Dec-15 Dec-15 Dec-15	02-Nov-15 06-Nov-15 01-Dec-15 05-Dec-15	971 1548	Novemb 13 21	er 2015	1	1	1
4 06-N 6 01-I 7 05-I 8 10-I 11 03-X 12 06-X 15 01-H 16 03-H 17 08-H 20 01-N 21 03-A 23 03-A	Nov-15 Dec-15 Dec-15 Dec-15 -Jan-16	06-Nov-15 01-Dec-15 05-Dec-15	1548	13 21		07-Nov-15	1073	14
4 06-N 6 01-I 7 05-I 8 10-I 11 03-X 12 06-X 15 01-H 16 03-H 17 08-H 20 01-N 21 03-A 23 03-A	Nov-15 Dec-15 Dec-15 Dec-15 -Jan-16	06-Nov-15 01-Dec-15 05-Dec-15	1548	21	5	07-Nov-15	1073	14
6 01-I 7 05-I 8 10-I 11 03 12 06 15 01-H 16 03-H 17 08-H 20 01-N 21 03-N 23 03-A	Dec-15 Dec-15 Dec-15 -Jan-16	01-Dec-15 05-Dec-15						1 1
7 05-I 8 10-I 11 03 12 06 15 01-I 16 03-I 17 08-I 20 01-N 21 03-N 23 03-A	Dec-15 Dec-15 -Jan-16	05-Dec-15	1111	Decemb			1	
7 05-I 8 10-I 11 03 12 06 15 01-I 16 03-I 17 08-I 20 01-N 21 03-N 23 03-A	Dec-15 Dec-15 -Jan-16	05-Dec-15	1111	Decemb		1		
7 05-I 8 10-I 11 03 12 06 15 01-I 16 03-I 17 08-I 20 01-N 21 03-N 23 03-A	Dec-15 Dec-15 -Jan-16	05-Dec-15	1111		er 2015			
8 10-I 11 03 12 06 12 06 15 01-H 16 03-H 17 08-H 20 01-N 21 03-N 23 03-A	Dec-15 Jan-16			15	9	13-Dec-15	2650	36
11 03 12 06 15 01-H 16 03-H 17 08-H 20 01-N 21 03-N 23 03-A	-Jan-16	10-Dec-15	843	11	10	20-Dec-15	2085	28
11 06-3 12 06-3 15 01-4 16 03-4 17 08-1 20 01-N 21 03-N 23 03-A			1259 (c)	17				
11 0.6 12 0.6 15 0.1-1 16 0.3-1 17 0.8-1 20 0.1-N 21 0.3-N 23 0.3-A								
12 06-3 12 06-3 15 01-4 16 03-4 17 08-1 20 01-N 21 03-N 23 03-A				Januar	y 2016			
15 01-H 16 03-H 17 08-H 20 01-N 21 03-N 23 03-A	T 4 4	03-Jan-16	1473	20	13	13-Jan-16	1482 (c)	20
16 03-H 17 08-H 20 01-N 21 03-N 23 03-A	-Jan-16	06-Jan-16	1918	26	14	27-Jan-16	1819 (c)	24
16 03-H 17 08-H 20 01-N 21 03-N 23 03-A								
16 03-H 17 08-H 20 01-N 21 03-N 23 03-A				Februar	ry 2016			
17 08-I 20 01-N 21 03-N 23 03-A	Feb-16	01-Feb-16	2688	36	18	10-Feb-16	2938 (c)	39
20 01-N 21 03-N 23 03-A	Feb-16	03-Feb-16	2130	29	19	27-Feb-16	2740	37
21 03-N 23 03-A	Feb-16	08-Feb-16	4691	63				
21 03-N 23 03-A				March	2016			
23 03-A	Mar-16	01-Mar-16	2718	37	22	22-Mar-16	3696	50
	Mar-16	03-Mar-16	2456	33				
				April	2016			
	Apr-16	03-Apr-16	3025	41	26	23-Apr-16	2963	40
24 13-A	Apr-16	13-Apr-16	3053	41	27	27-Apr-16	2368	32
25 20-A	Apr-16	20-Apr-16	2922	39	28	30-Apr-16	2598	35
	•	•						
•				May	2016	•		
29 02-N		02-May-16	2492	34	31	19-May-16	1418 (c)	19
30 17-N	May-16	17-May-16	1742	23	32	31-May-16	1224	16

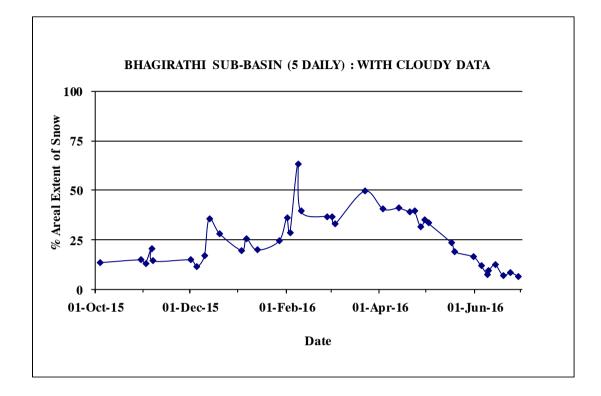
June 2016								
33	05-Jun-16	886	12	37	19-Jun-16	541 (c)	7	
34	09-Jun-16	576 (c)	8	38	24-Jun-16	622	8	
35	10-Jun-16	702 (c)	9	39	29-Jun-16	502 (c)	7	
36	14-Jun-16	934 (c)	13					

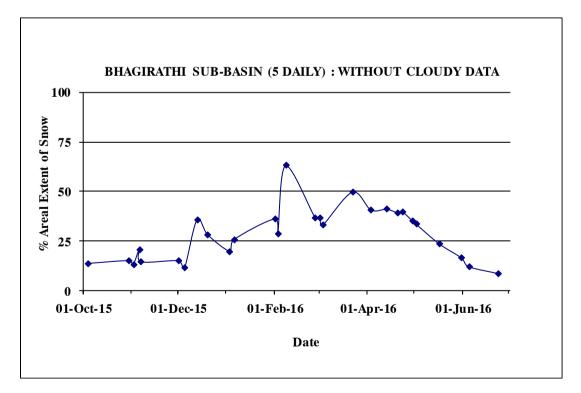
AREAL EXTENT OF SNOW (10 DAILY)

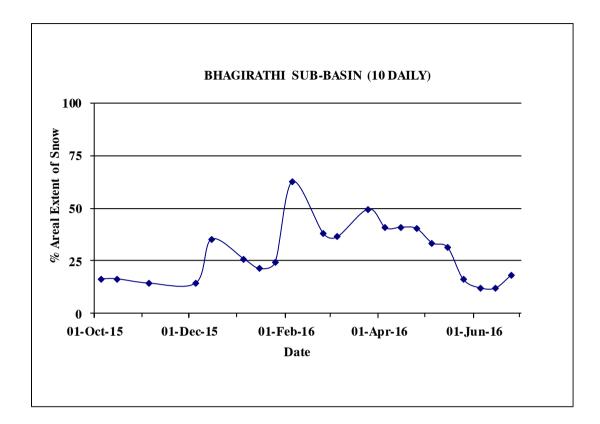
BASIN NAME: BHAGIRATHI

BASIN AREA: 7438 sq km

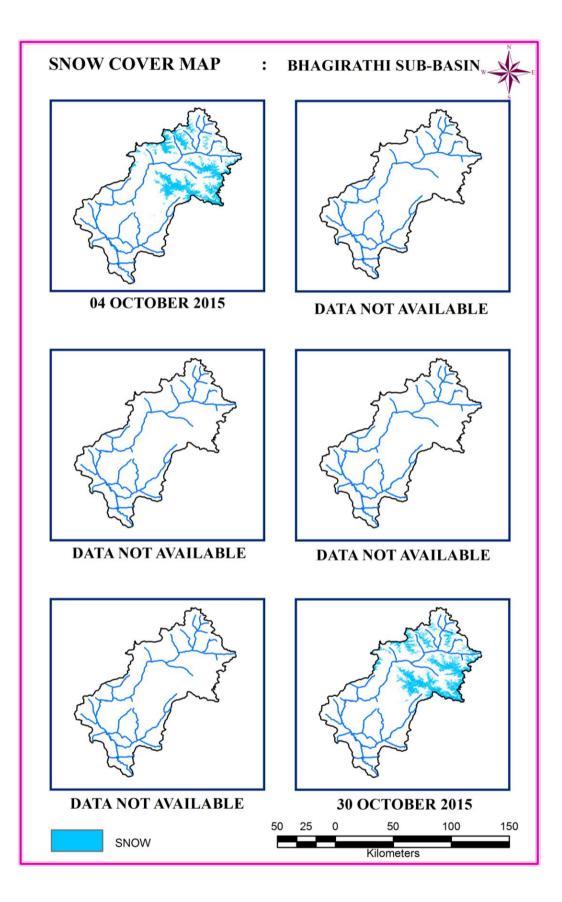
S No	Date	Snow cover (sq km)	Snow cover (%)	S No	Date	Snow cover (sq km)	Snow cover (%)	
October 2015				November 2015				
1	05-Oct-15	1223	16	3	05-Nov-15	1072	14	
2	15-Oct-15	1227	16					
L	Decer	mber 2015		January 2016				
4	05-Dec-15	1080	15	7	05-Jan-16	1919	26	
5	15-Dec-15	2622	35	8	15-Jan-16	1583	21	
6	25-Dec-15				25-Jan-16	1814	24	
February 2016				March 2016				
9	05-Feb-16	4647	62	10	05-Mar-16	2703	36	
L								
11	25-Feb-16	2818	38	12	25-Mar-16	3684	50	
L	Ар	ril 2016		May 2016				
13	05-Apr-16	3020	41	16	05-May-16	2486	33	
14	15-Apr-16	3043	41	17	15-May-16	2328	31	
15	25-Apr-16	2995	40	18	25-May-16	1209	16	
	Ju	ne 2016						
19	05-Jun-2016	904	12					
20	15-Jun-2016	906	12					
21	25-Jun-2016	1363	18					

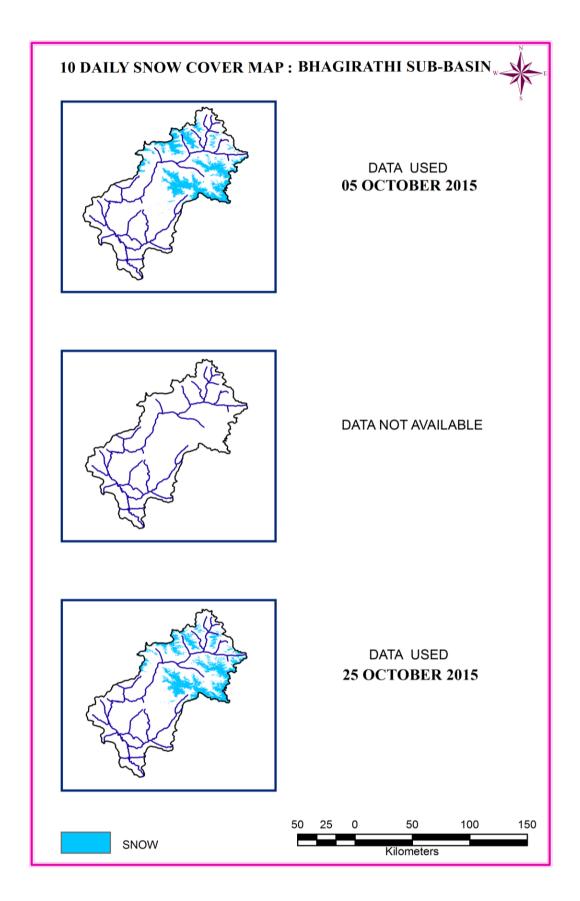


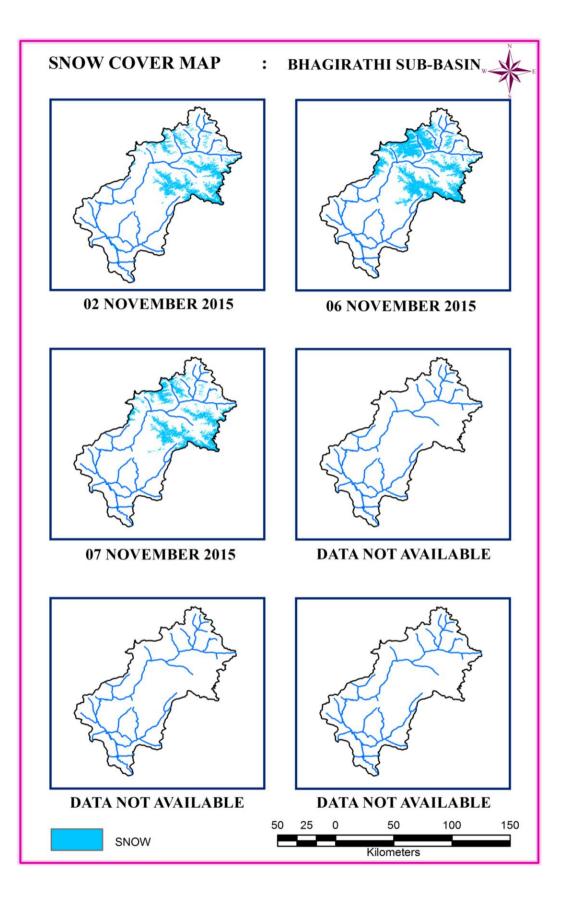


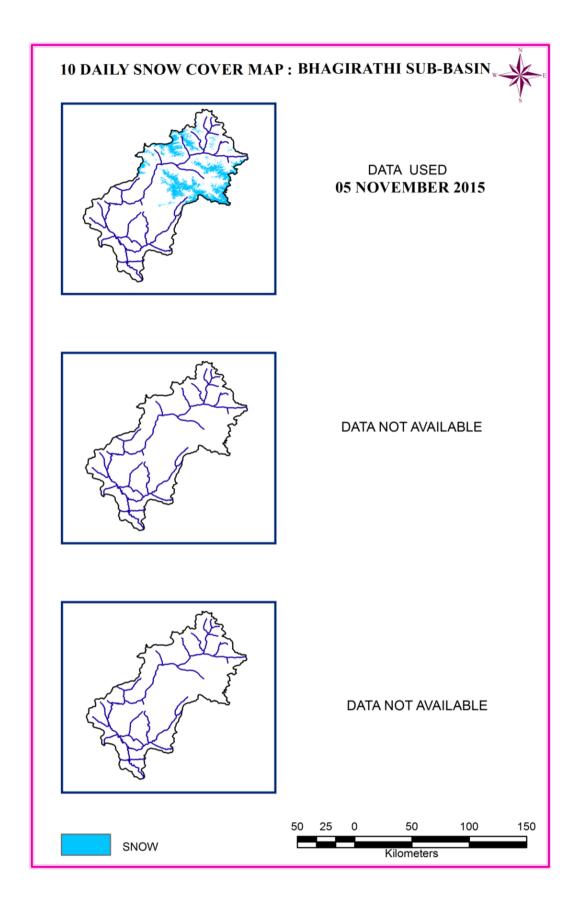


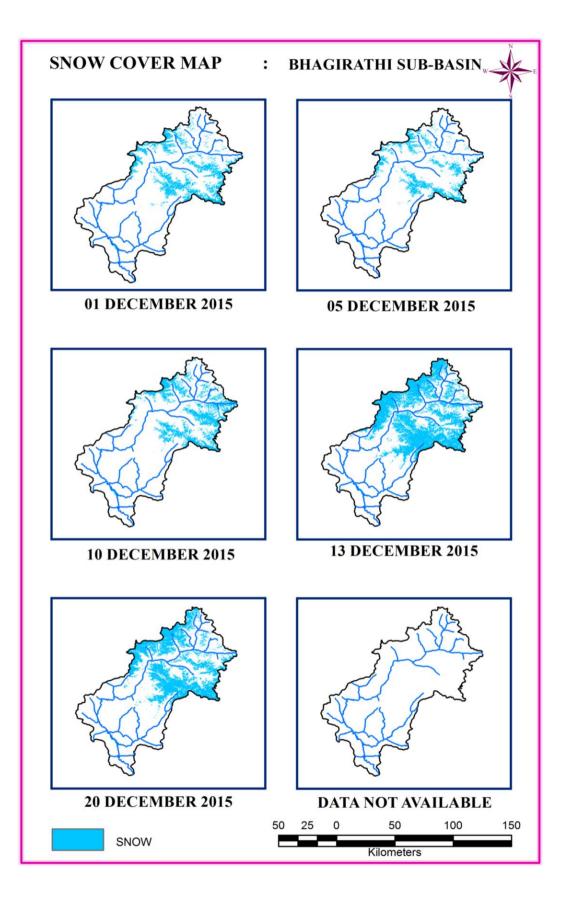
SNOW COVER MAP

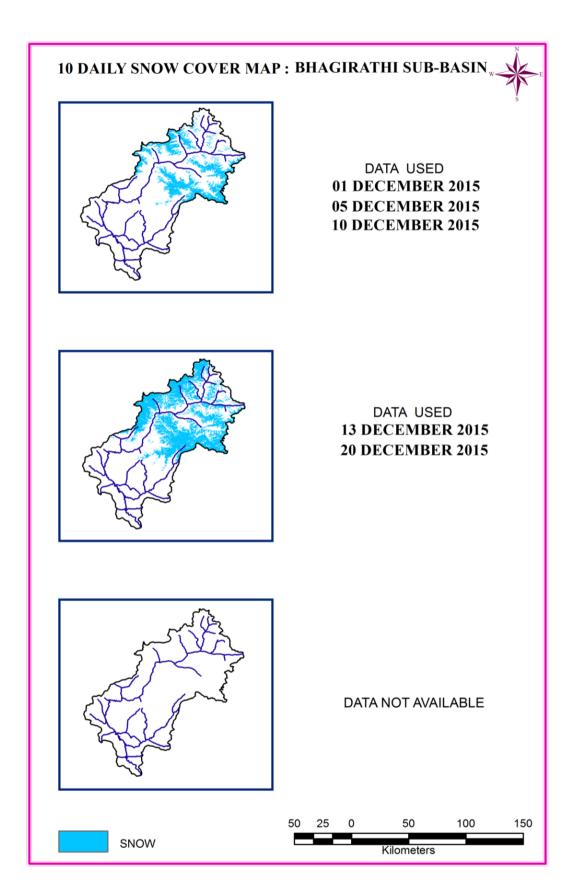


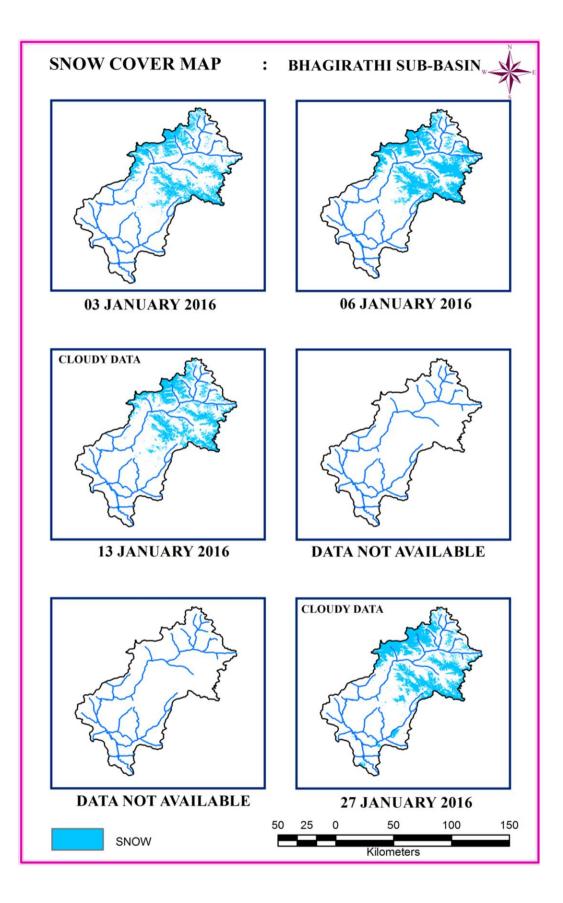


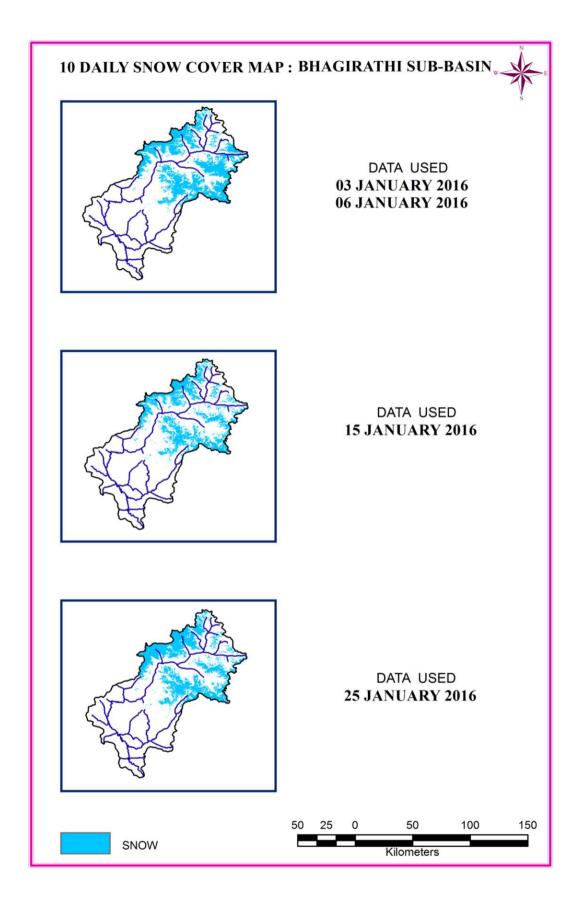


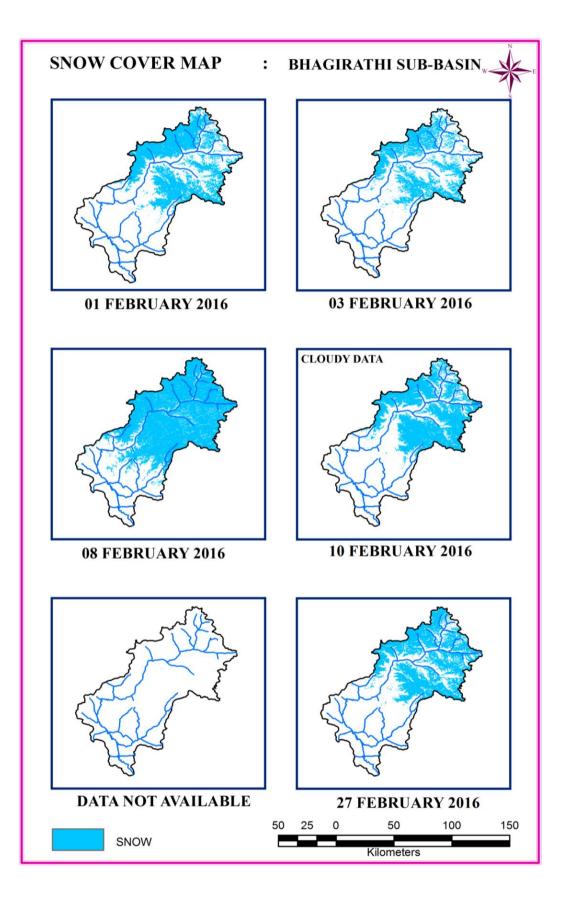


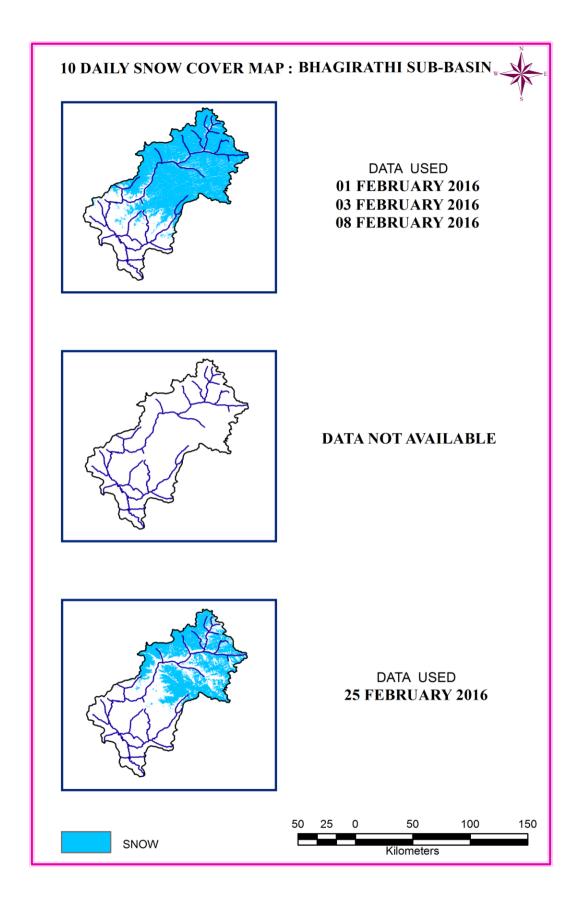


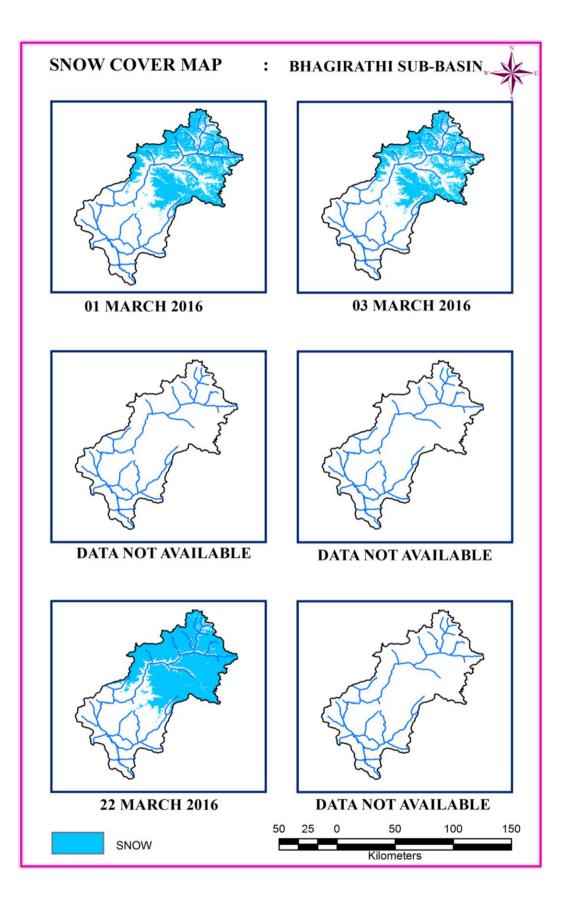


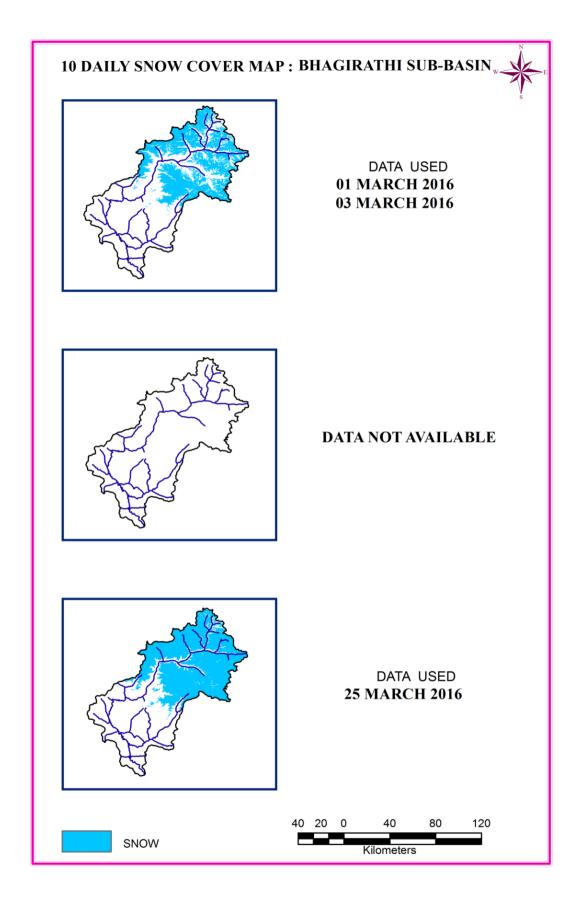


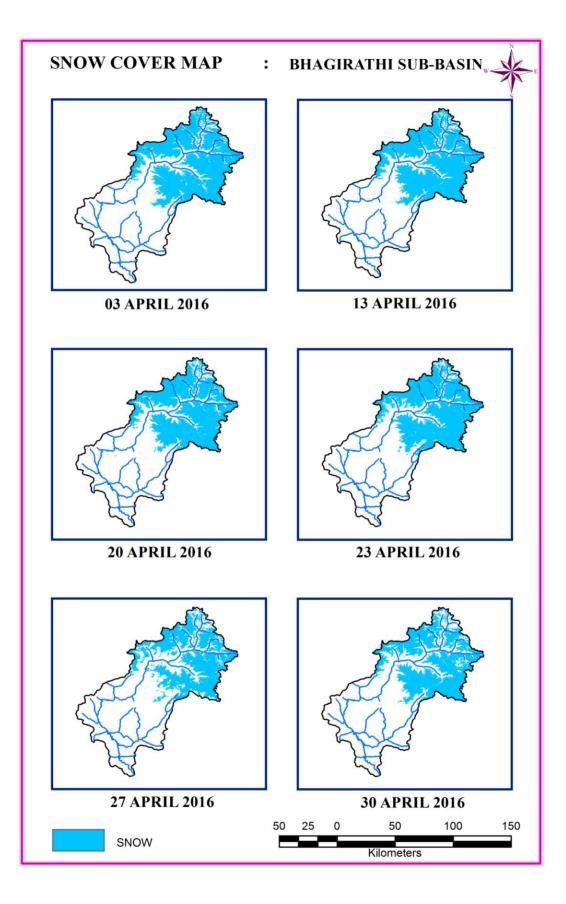


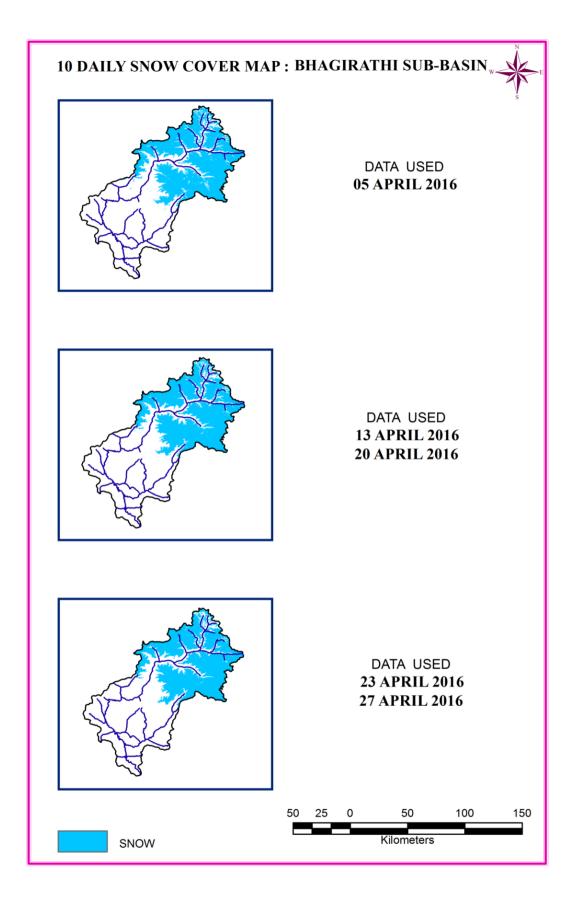


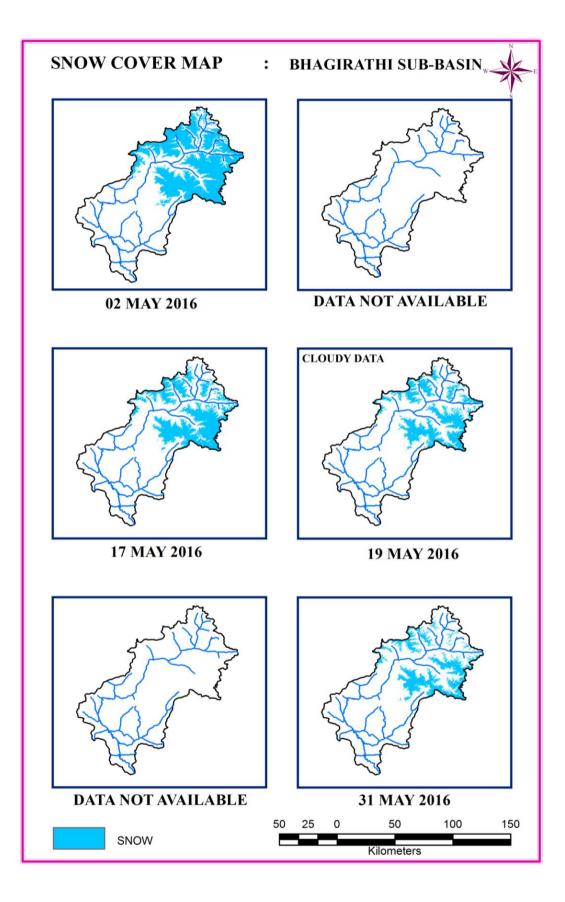


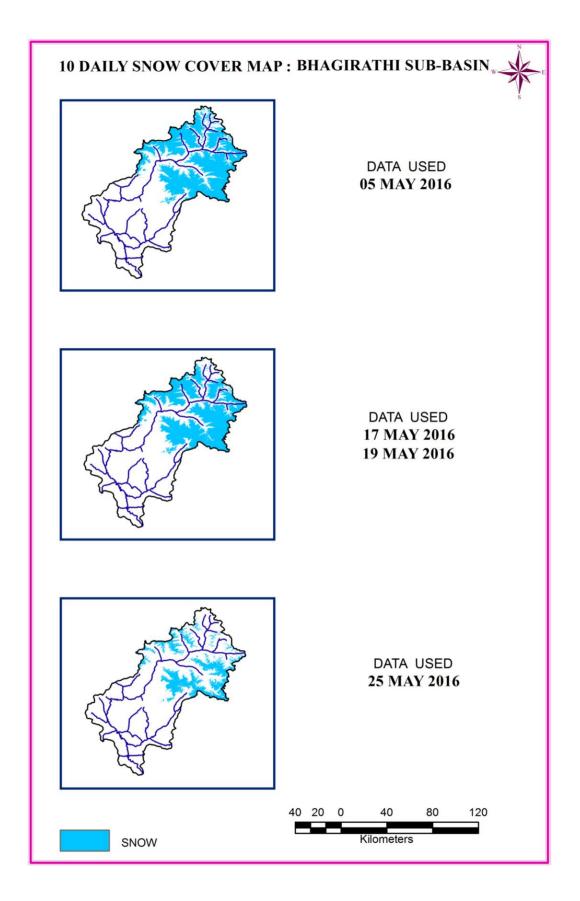


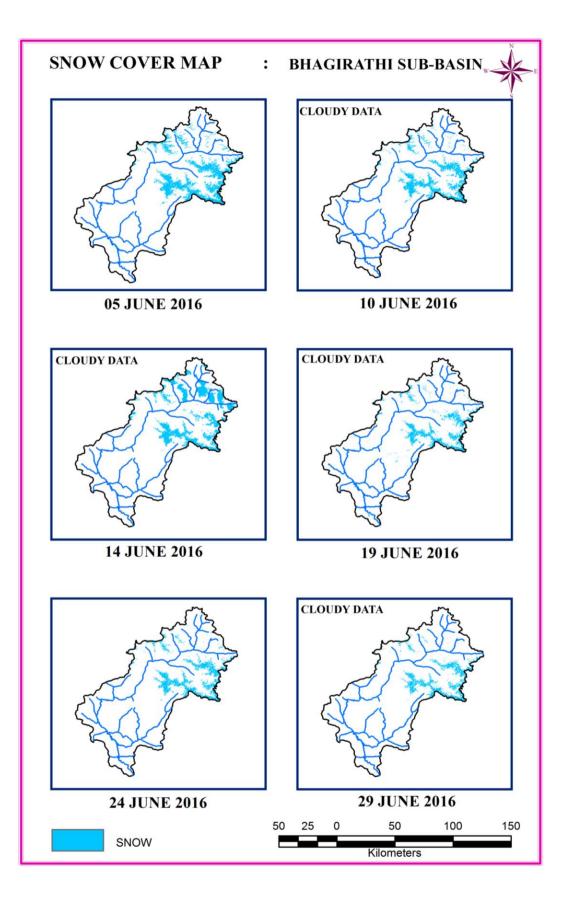


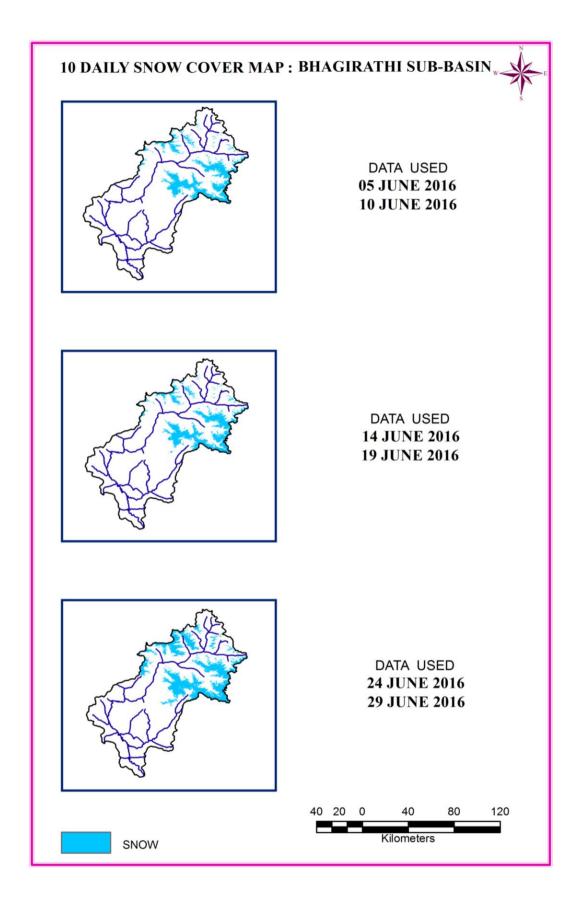












YAMUNA SUB-BASIN

AREAL EXTENT OF SNOW (5 DAILY)

BASIN NAME: YAMUNA

BASIN AREA: 3527 sq km

S No	Date	Snow cover (sq km)	Snow cover	S No	Date	Snow cover (sq km)	Snow cover (%)
	1	()	Octobe	r 2015		(3.1)	(,)
1	04-Oct-2015	249 (c)	7	3	30-Oct-2015	240	7
2	28-Oct-2015	214 (c)	6				
			Novemb	er 2015	•		•
4	01-Nov-2015	213	6	13	06-Nov-2015	569	16
5	02-Nov-2015	201	7	14	07-Nov-2015	424	12
		1	Decemb	er 2015			
8	01-Dec-2015	663	19	11	10-Dec-2015	276 (c)	8
9	05-Dec-2015	427	12	12	13-Dec-2015	1483	42
10	07-Dec-2015	355	10	13	20-Dec-2015	1041	30
		I	Januar	•	I		
14	03-Jan-16	803	23	16	13-Jan-16	688 (c)	20
15	06-Jan-16	794 (c)	23	17	27-Jan-16	763 (c)	22
	1		Februa				
18	01-Feb-16	1291	37	21	10-Feb-16	1316 (c)	37
19	03-Feb-16	1154	33	22	17-Feb-16	1285	36
20	08-Feb-16	2958	84	23	27-Feb-16	1020	29
	1	r	March				1
24	01-March-16	1067	30	26	22-March-16	1346	38
25	03-March-16	942	27				
		r	April				
27	03-April-16	950	27	30	23-April-16	823 (c)	23
28	13-April-16	991	28	31	27-April-16	550 (c)	16
29	20-April-16	888	25	32	30-April-16	768	22
			<u> </u>	2017			
22	02 1 1 1 1	<u> </u>	May		10 10 15	156 ()	10
33	02-May-16	694	20	35	19-May-16	456 (c)	13
34	17-May-16	511	14	36	31-May-16	480	14

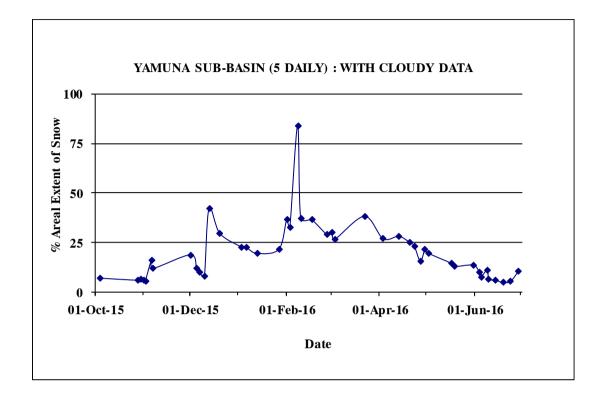
	June 2016								
37	04-June-16	347 (c)	10	41	14-June-16	219	6		
38	05-June-16	275 (c)	8	42	19-June-16	172 (c)	5		
39	09-June-16	391 (c)	11	43	24-June-16	194	6		
40	10-June-16	228 (c)	6	44	29-June-16	370 (c)	10		

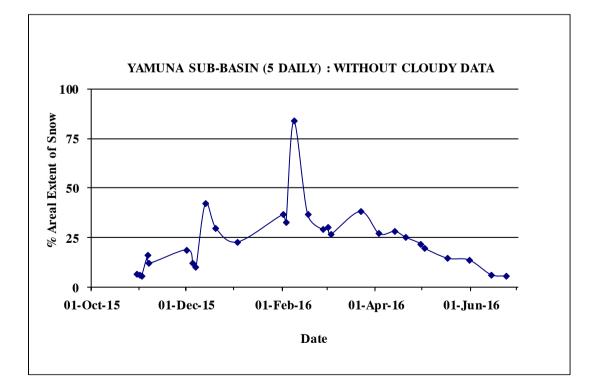
AREAL EXTENT OF SNOW (10 DAILY)

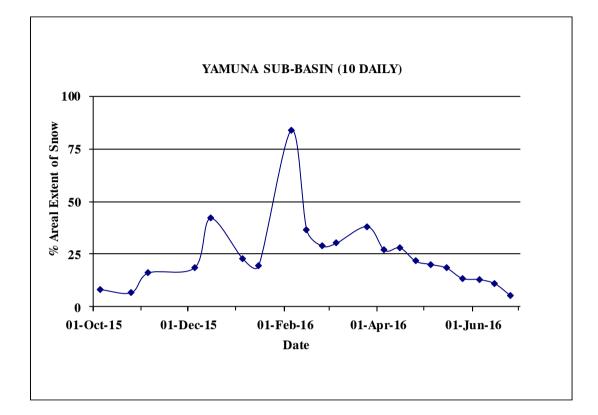
BASIN NAME: YAMUNA

BASIN AREA: 3527 sq km

S No	Date	Snow cover (sq km)	Snow cover (%)	S No	Date	Snow cover (sq km)	Snow cover (%)
	·		Octobe	er 2015		• <u> </u>	
1	5-Oct-15	293	8	2	25-Oct-15	241	7
			Novemb	er 2015			
3	5-Nov-15	570	16				
	1	1	Decemb	er 2015	1	1	1
4	5-Dec-15	662	19	5	15-Dec-15	1485	42
	1	1	Januar	-	1	I	1
6	5-Jan-16	803	23	7	15-Jan-16	689	20
	1	T	Februa		I	ſ	1
8	05-Feb-16	2958	84	10	25-Feb-16	1020	29
9	15-Feb-16	1286	36				
	T	T	March		T	Γ	T
11	5-March-16	1067	30	12	25-March-16	1346	38
				2016			
10			April				
13	5-April-16	949	27	15	25-April-16	768	22
14	15-April-16	991	28				
	1	1	May		1	[
16	5-May-16	712	20	18	25-May-16	480	14
17	15-May-16	653	19	• • • • •			
	1	1	June		1	[
19	5-June-16	460	13	21	25-June-16	194	6
20	15-June-16	391	11				







SNOW COVER MAP

