

## Weekend Ozone Effect over Rural and Urban Site in India

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### Abstract

Weekend ozone effect studied over a tropical rural and urban site in India shows higher ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) concentration on weekend compared to weekday. The weekend ozone effect was observed mostly during the summer and winter at the urban, and during summer season at the rural site. Decreased NO<sub>x</sub> emissions combined with VOC sensitivity on weekends appears to be the possible cause of the weekend ozone effect. The NO<sub>x</sub> concentration was low on weekend due to reduced commuter vehicular traffic emission. The results indicate nonlinear behavior in the chemistry of O<sub>3</sub> production over the tropical region.

**Keywords:** Surface ozone; Weekend effect; Photochemical production; NO<sub>x</sub> titration; Precursor gas emission.

### INTRODUCTION

A phenomenon of higher ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) concentration on weekend (Saturday to Sunday) compared to weekday (Monday to Friday) is referred to as the “weekend ozone effect,” despite the lower emission of anthropogenic precursor gases on weekend. Weekend O<sub>3</sub> effect has been reported in some areas in America since the 1970s (Elkus and Wilson, 1977). The weekend O<sub>3</sub> effect has been observed over mid- and high-latitude environments containing mostly nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>), NO<sub>x</sub>-saturated or volatile organic compounds (VOC), VOC-sensitive (Blanchard and Fairley, 2001; Beaney and Gough, 2002; Marr and Harley, 2002; Qin *et al.*, 2004). Altshuler *et al.* (1995) suggested that different dropped rates for NO<sub>x</sub> and VOC emission on weekend is a major cause of the weekend O<sub>3</sub> effect in California. Dreher and Harley (1998) considered that different heavy-duty diesel truck activity on highways between weekdays and weekends caused

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different reductions for NO<sub>x</sub> and VOC responsible for weekend O<sub>3</sub> effect. Vukovich (2000) proposed that a larger amount of previous-day carryover ozone was responsible for the higher weekend ozone. Marr and Harley (2002a, b) proposed that less absorption of sunlight due to lower fine-particle concentrations on weekend, resulting in enhanced ozone formation, might be a cause for the weekend ozone effect. Qin *et al.* (2004) suggested that VOC sensitivity combined with a decrease of NO<sub>x</sub> emissions on weekend was a cause.

Blanchard and Fairley (2001) based suggested criteria for occurrence of weekend O<sub>3</sub> effect on differences between weekend and weekday ozone. If that difference is less than 5 ppbv, no weekend O<sub>3</sub> effect is observed. A difference of 5-15 ppbv is considered a moderate weekend O<sub>3</sub> effect, and intense weekend O<sub>3</sub> effect is above 15 ppbv. However, the mechanisms for the weekend effect on O<sub>3</sub> formation are still not well understood.

Asia, particularly India, is considered to be NO<sub>x</sub>-limited for photochemical production of O<sub>3</sub> (Berntsen *et al.*, 1996). Road vehicular traffic is a dominant anthropogenic emission source of ozone precursor, particularly NO<sub>x</sub> (Garg *et al.*, 2001). The diurnal and seasonal variation of O<sub>3</sub> is controlled by photochemical production of O<sub>3</sub> which is related to NO<sub>x</sub> concentration (Lal *et al.*, 2000; Naja and Lal, 2002; Debaje *et al.*, 2003). However, O<sub>3</sub> concentration is higher on weekend than weekday in spite of low vehicular commuter traffic emission of NO<sub>x</sub> over the tropics. In this study, the possible cause for occurrence of the weekend O<sub>3</sub> effect over the Indian region is discussed.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Measurement site*

Measurements of O<sub>3</sub> were carried out at two locations, one urban and the other rural. The urban site on the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) campus was located about 15 km away from Pune City (18.5°N, 73.8°E, 559 m above sea level) on the outskirts in the northwest sector. Commuter vehicular traffic is the major emission source of ozone precursor gases at the IITM campus. An industrial area located about 25 km away from the IITM campus might also act as a source of precursor gases when wind flow during winter is in a northeast direction. Ozone concentration measurements were carried out from January 2001 to December 2005 at the urban site.

The rural site, Johrapur (19.3°N, 75.2°E, 474 m), is free from vehicular-traffic emission source of O<sub>3</sub> precursor gases. Mostly seasonal farming activities are precursor gas emission sources. To study the weekend effect in the rural region, measurements of O<sub>3</sub> were carried out from March 2002 to December 2005.

### ***Measurement technique***

A modified electrochemical ozone sensor was used for continuous O<sub>3</sub> measurements (IMD, 1999). The detection limit of the ozone instrument was 1 parts per billion by volume (ppbv), with a precision better than  $\pm 2\%$  (WMO, 1994). The sensor was calibrated with a UV photometric ozone analyzer (Model O342M, Environment S. A., May 2002) by running them together at an average time interval of 1 h. The correlation coefficient was 0.86.

### ***Data***

Hourly averages of O<sub>3</sub> concentration were computed from the continuous ozone record. The diurnal hourly average for the study period was computed from hourly averages of O<sub>3</sub> concentration for Monday through Friday as weekday O<sub>3</sub>, and for Saturday through Sunday as weekend O<sub>3</sub>. The hourly average maximum ozone concentration at noon was also computed for monthly weekend and weekday. For monthly, the seasonal mean of weekend and weekday O<sub>3</sub> was computed for different seasons during the study period: summer (March-May), monsoon (June-September), post-monsoon (October-November) and winter (December-February). Seasonal averages were computed from monthly averages of maximum O<sub>3</sub> concentration observed at noon.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Ozone concentration over the Indian region depends on photochemical production of O<sub>3</sub> related mainly to NO<sub>x</sub> concentration. Commuter vehicle is the major source of NO<sub>x</sub> emission at the urban site, where it is assumed that weekend traffic density is lower than on weekdays. However, in spite of low weekend NO<sub>x</sub> emissions, high O<sub>3</sub> concentration was observed at both the Johrapur and the Pune sites. Table 1 shows that the seasonal average of maximum O<sub>3</sub> concentrations observed at noon (1100-1600 h) when, for the study period at both sites, O<sub>3</sub> concentration on weekend was greater than weekday during four seasons (summer, monsoon, post-monsoon, and winter). Weekend ozone was higher than weekday for 25 weeks (50%) and 30 weeks (60%) for the rural and urban site, respectively, and in the corresponding remaining week, weekend ozone was lower than weekday.

Table 1 shows that the higher O<sub>3</sub> was observed on weekend compared to weekday at both sites. The occurrence of weekend O<sub>3</sub> effect was determined by the differences in O<sub>3</sub> concentration between weekend and weekday. The criteria used were classified in three categories: a) intense weekend effect if O<sub>3</sub> difference is  $> 15$  ppbv; b) moderate weekend effect if O<sub>3</sub> difference is 5-15 ppbv; and c) no weekend effect if O<sub>3</sub> difference is  $< 5$  ppbv (Blanchard and Fairley, 2001). Using

the above criteria, it can be seen that intense weekend effect is observed in summer ( $> 16$  ppbv difference) during the years 2003 and 2004 at the rural site, and in the winter in the urban site (34.0 ppbv difference) during 2005. Moderate weekend effect at both sites was observed mostly in winter, premonsoon, and summer for three years during 2003, 2004 and 2005. For the year, moderate weekend  $O_3$  effect occurred for 12 weeks (25%) in the urban, and 10 weeks (20%) at the rural site. However, no weekend effect is observed in the monsoon season at either the rural or the urban site.

It is also seen from Table 1 that from 2003 to 2005 the weekend  $O_3$  effect increased at the urban site, while no systematic increase was observed at the rural site. This indicates that weekend photochemical production of  $O_3$  was more sensitive and more quickly disturbed at the rural site, while being less disturbed at the urban site. Apparently, weekend  $O_3$  phenomenon depends largely on differences in  $NO_x$  concentration between weekday and weekend, together with the sensitivity of VOC towards the photochemical production of  $O_3$ , which occurs quickly for some VOCs at low  $NO_x$  concentrations (Qin *et al.*, 2004). Qin *et al.* (2004) reported that VOC sensitivity, combined with a decrease in weekend  $NO_x$  emissions, caused weekend  $O_3$  effect. At the urban site, where weekend commuter vehicular emissions are lower, emissions consisted of about 95% nitric oxide (NO), and very low nitrogen dioxide ( $NO_2$ ) and VOC concentration. Increased traffic from Monday to Friday increased NO concentrations responsible for decreased  $O_3$  concentrations on weekdays. The major  $NO_x$  emission related to commuter vehicles on weekday leading to suppressed  $O_3$  concentrations was due more to the strong  $NO_x$  titration ( $O_3 + NO = NO_2 + O_2$ ) compared to weekend. Liu *et al.* (1987) reported that the photochemical production of  $O_3$  decreases as  $NO_x$  concentration increases. On the other hand, weekend commuter vehicular traffic is less compared to weekday, which results in less  $NO_x$  emission and less  $NO_x$  titration. Moderate weekend  $NO_x$  concentration conditions inducing faster photochemical production of  $O_3$ , and less titration of  $O_3$  by  $NO_x$  result in higher  $O_3$  concentrations as compared to weekday. In short, production of  $O_3$  is increase, and loss is less, which leads to elevated weekend  $O_3$  concentration at the urban site.

At the rural site,  $NO_x$  concentration due to emissions from local activities was low, and to some extent was transported from nearby developing urban areas; thus, contributing to  $O_3$  production. While photochemical production of  $O_3$  depends on  $NO_x$  concentration in a  $NO_x$ -limited environment over this region, it was observed that the above relationship is not valid in summer and winter. Production of  $O_3$  was higher on weekend than weekday in spite of low  $NO_x$  concentration. The emission of anthropogenic  $NO_x$  was low, and a large amount of trees in the rural produces high levels of natural hydrocarbon (isoprene). The higher weekend  $O_3$  concentration appears due to fast photochemical production of  $O_3$  by isoprene at low  $NO_x$  concentration. Benjamin *et al.* (1997) reported that isoprene emission increases with ambient temperature and solar radiation, resulting in highest isoprene emission at noon. The

photochemical production of O<sub>3</sub> by isoprene is highest at noon due large values of MIR as compared to other anthropogenic VOCs (Carter, 1994). In contrast, low weekday O<sub>3</sub> concentration seems to be due to increased NO<sub>x</sub> concentration, which reduces the photochemical production of O<sub>3</sub> by the oxidation of isoprene.

While weekend O<sub>3</sub> effect is significant in summer and winter, it is not observed during monsoon. Meteorological conditions were also responsible to some extent for intense weekend O<sub>3</sub> effect on a seasonal basis; however, it appears that differences in O<sub>3</sub> precursor gas concentration (NO<sub>x</sub>, VOC) are a major cause for this phenomenon of weekend O<sub>3</sub> effect. The results obtained in the present study indicate that higher O<sub>3</sub> concentration on weekend compared to weekday suggests that the photochemical production of O<sub>3</sub> is nonlinear over this region.

**Table 1.** Hourly averaged maximum ozone concentrations (ppbv) observed at noon when weekend ozone concentrations are greater than weekday concentrations during different seasons in the rural and urban site.

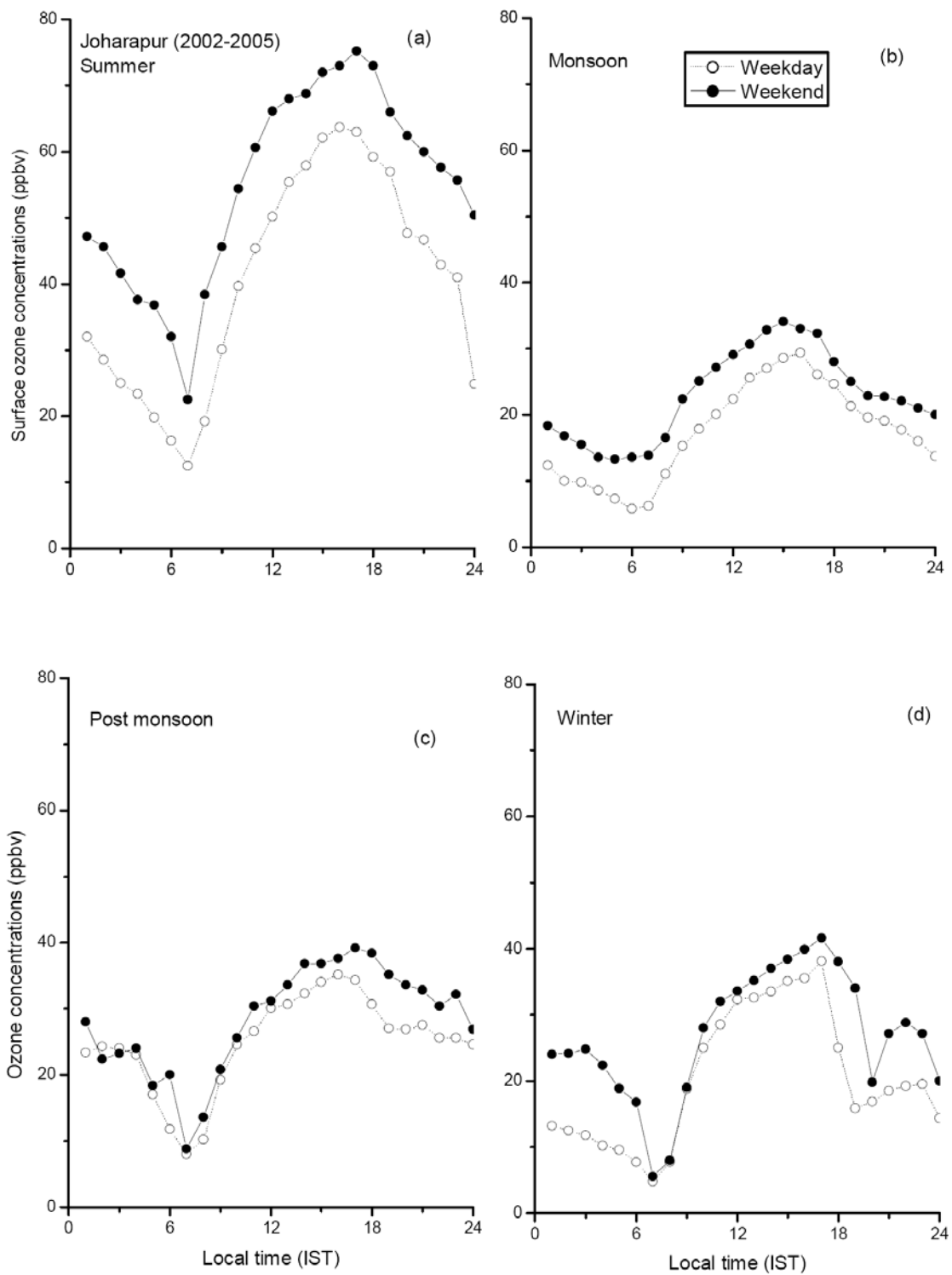
Year	Rural				Urban											
	Summer WD	Monsoon WE	Post-monsoon WD	Winter WE	Summer WD	Monsoon WE	Post-monsoon WD	Winter WE	Summer WD	Monsoon WE	Post-monsoon WD	Winter WE				
2001	.....				53.0	56.0	18.0	19.1	9.7	12.8	39.0	41.0				
2002	34.4	44.3	18.1	22.1	34.0	36.8	30.3	36.0	51.2	54.2	28.8	31.2	10.5	11.5	33.5	35.2
2003	59.2	75.2	23.7	28.8	34.3	39.2	40.2	46.8	49.8	61.0	16.2	21.0	15.0	21.5	29.2	36.0
2004	37.1	53.6	19.1	28.8	30.4	35.8	35.6	42.1	45.0	59.3	20.3	25.2	24.0	30.0	47.3	61.2
2005	52.0	58.0	18.0	22.0	31.5	36.0	38.0	45.0	56.0	66.0	19.0	23.0	39.4	48.0	49.0	83.0

Ozone was not measured during 2001 at rural site. The computed values are seasonal averages of maximum O<sub>3</sub> observed at noon. WD = Weekday ozone concentrations, WE = Weekend ozone concentrations.

As discussed in the introduction, different hypotheses have been proposed by several researchers to explain the weekend ozone effect. As reported by these authors the environment is mostly NO<sub>x</sub>-saturated or VOC-sensitive in the mid and high latitude where the weekend O<sub>3</sub> effect occurs. However, in this study, the weekend ozone effect observed in the tropical India environment is NO<sub>x</sub>-limited. The weekend O<sub>3</sub> effect results obtained in this study are in agreement with results reported by the Qin *et al.* (2004). Their results suggest that the increase of VOC sensitivity for the photochemical production of O<sub>3</sub> at low NO<sub>x</sub> concentration on weekend is the cause of weekend O<sub>3</sub> effect phenomenon. However, long-term datasets for India are needed to support the variations observed in O<sub>3</sub> on weekend and weekday. Data are also needed for O<sub>3</sub> precursor gases of NO<sub>x</sub> and VOC in order to elaborate on the results obtained in this study.

***Diurnal variation of ozone concentrations on weekday and weekend in the rural and urban site***

Fig. 1 (a-d) shows hourly average of seasonal diurnal variation of weekend and weekday O<sub>3</sub> concentrations during the four seasons of summer, monsoon, post-monsoon, and winter at the rural site. Seasonal averages are computed from the weeks in which weekend ozone was higher than the weekday ozone. Fig. 1 shows that the highest maximum O<sub>3</sub> concentrations observed were about 75 ppbv on weekend and 64 ppbv on weekday at around 1600 h in the afternoon in summer (Fig. 1a). The corresponding next highest O<sub>3</sub> concentration of 42 ppbv and 38 ppbv was observed at around 1700 h in winter (Fig. 1d). The diurnal variation of O<sub>3</sub> was lowest in monsoon season on weekday (29 ppbv) and on weekend (34 ppbv) at noon, due to cloudy and rainy weather. However, O<sub>3</sub> concentration was higher on weekend than weekday by about 5-7 ppbv, due to less NO<sub>x</sub> titration at the rural site (Fig. 1b). During post-monsoon season, the average O<sub>3</sub> concentrations on weekday and weekend started to increase after monsoon season because of less cloud cover and favorable meteorological conditions for photochemical production of O<sub>3</sub> (Fig. 1c). The difference between weekday and weekend ozone was observed to be less; however, weekend ozone concentration was still higher than weekday. The higher O<sub>3</sub> concentration on weekend was maintained from morning throughout day and nighttime in all seasons. The higher O<sub>3</sub> on weekend due to decreased NO<sub>x</sub> emission resulted in less NO<sub>x</sub> titration of O<sub>3</sub>. Decreased anthropogenic VOC emission appears to increase isoprene reactivity, which possesses high MIR (Carter, 1994). The photochemical production of O<sub>3</sub> depends on its precursor-gas concentration mainly on NO<sub>x</sub> and VOC sensitivity. The emission of isoprene from trees at the rural site was related to the ambient temperature (Benjamin *et al.*, 1997), which was highest in the afternoon. Emission of NO<sub>x</sub> depends on anthropogenic activity mainly during daytime. Therefore, the O<sub>3</sub> peak appeared mostly in the afternoon at the rural site probably because of the availability of precursor gases (isoprene) for photochemical production of O<sub>3</sub> in the afternoon.



**Fig. 1.** Seasonal diurnal variation of ozone concentrations on weekday and weekend at the rural Joharapur measurement site, indicating that ozone is higher on weekend.

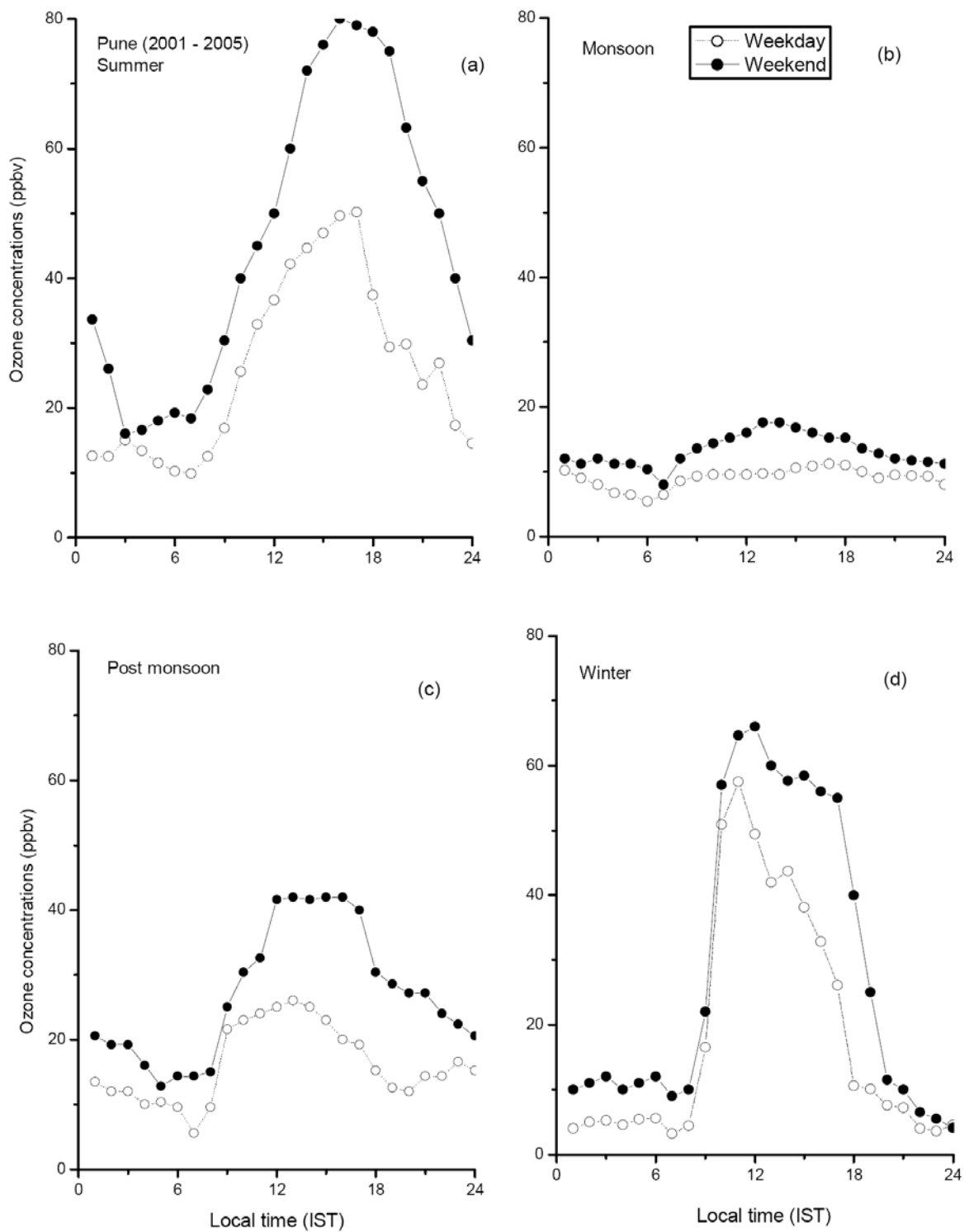
Fig. 2 (a-d) shows average seasonal diurnal variation of O<sub>3</sub> concentrations on weekday and weekend during four seasons from January 2001 to December 2005 over Pune, the urban site. Fig. 2a shows that the highest maximum O<sub>3</sub> concentration of about 80 ppbv was observed on weekend in summer, which was higher than the rural site; and 50 ppbv on weekday in summer, which was lower than the rural site in the afternoon (around 1530 h) (Fig. 2a). The winter experienced the next-highest O<sub>3</sub> concentration on weekday and weekend; about 66 ppbv and 58 ppbv, respectively, at 1200 h (Fig. 2d), also higher than at the rural site (Fig. 1d). The lowest O<sub>3</sub> concentration (< 20 ppbv) on weekend and weekday was observed in monsoon season (Fig. 2b), which was lower than at the rural site (Fig. 1b); however, it can be seen that the weekend O<sub>3</sub> concentration was higher than weekday concentration. The high O<sub>3</sub> concentration in summer was related to the active photochemical production of O<sub>3</sub> due to intense solar radiation and high temperature.

The average O<sub>3</sub> concentration in the early morning (0000-0400 h) on weekday and weekend are almost different for two sites with moderate weekend effect at the rural site in summer and winter, and no weekend effect in other seasons (Fig. 1). At the urban site, the O<sub>3</sub> concentration was lower (50 ppbv) on weekday than at the rural site (64 ppbv) on weekday in summer (Fig. 1a and Fig. 2a); possibly due to fresh emission of NO (from commuter vehicle) that destroyed ozone during the night. During the winter, high O<sub>3</sub> was observed on weekend (66 ppbv) and weekday (58 ppbv) at the urban site than the corresponding O<sub>3</sub> (42, 38 ppbv) at the rural site, due to trapping of O<sub>3</sub> near the earth's surface by temperature inversion in the atmospheric boundary layer.

Minimum O<sub>3</sub> concentration was observed during morning hours in all seasons at both sites. Therefore, high nighttime carryover ozone and low morning emission of NO<sub>x</sub> on weekend, as observed by Vukovich (2000a), were not observed over the present study sites, which, in this study, produced weekend O<sub>3</sub> effect of a minimum O<sub>3</sub> concentration (5-10 ppbv) attained everyday in the morning hours (0600-0700 h) in each season at both the sites.

The average O<sub>3</sub> concentrations in the early morning (0400-0700 h) on weekday and weekend for the rural and urban sites differ, with moderate weekend effect in summer at Johrapur and no weekend effect in summer at Pune (Fig. 1a and 2a). Hence, this study revealed that nighttime carryover O<sub>3</sub> is not the cause of the weekend effect at either site. The cause of weekend O<sub>3</sub> effect is the lack of fresh emission NO, which destroyed weekend O<sub>3</sub> at the urban site. Blanchard and Fairly (2001) suggested that the weekend effect is related to whether ozone formation is VOC- or NO<sub>x</sub>-sensitive, with higher weekend ozone occurring in VOC-sensitive areas, as observed in the present study at the urban site. The results obtained in this study support the hypothesis that the weekend effect is due to a combination of VOC-sensitivity and reduced NO<sub>x</sub> emission on weekends (Qin *et al.*, 2004).





**Fig. 2.** Seasonal diurnal variation of ozone concentrations on weekday and weekend at the urban Pune measurement site, indicating that ozone is higher on weekend..

**Comparison of weekend and weekday ozone concentration observed in the rural and urban site**

**Table 2.** Summary of the weekend and weekday ozone concentrations differences (ppbv) observed for various ranges in rural and urban site for the period of 2001-2005.

WE and WD differences (ppbv)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)
WE>WD		
0-5	30	30
5-15	20	25
>15	00	5
b) WE<WD	50	40
c) Total	100	100

Weekend ozone concentration = WE, Weekday ozone concentration = WD

Table 2 summarizes averaged weekday and weekend ozone concentration observed for different ranges over these two sites for the study period. It can be seen that the average weekend O<sub>3</sub> effect observed for 25 weeks (50%) at the rural site in a single year, and 30 weeks (60%) at the urban indicates nonlinear behavior of O<sub>3</sub> chemistry during those weeks. In the remaining corresponding 25 weeks (50%) and 20 weeks (40%), the O<sub>3</sub> concentration is higher on weekday than weekend (weekend O<sub>3</sub> effect is not observed), indicating a linear behavior in the chemistry of O<sub>3</sub> production for these remaining weeks. The moderate weekend O<sub>3</sub> effect is observed frequently over 10 weeks (20%) and 12 weeks (25%) in rural and urban site, respectively; and the intense weekend O<sub>3</sub> effect (5%) is observed in urban site for only a few weeks in summer. This indicates a mixed (linear and nonlinear) chemistry behavior of O<sub>3</sub> production over this region. Further, it confirms that the weekend effect is not observed on every week of each month in the year; however, weekend effect is observed when production of O<sub>3</sub> is nonlinear. Also, the weekend effect is more pronounced during summer and winter, and not observed during the monsoon season. The spread of the weekend ozone effect (more frequent occurrences) in urban may be due to a shift in ozone formation processes from a NO<sub>x</sub>-limited to a VOC-sensitive environment.

The difference between weekend and weekday ozone concentrations in 0-5 ppbv range is observed over 17 weeks (30%) at both the sites. It is possible that, in the near future over this region, the range of O<sub>3</sub> (0-5 ppbv) may shift to the range of 5-15 ppbv O<sub>3</sub> of moderate weekend effect due to increased vehicular traffic emission, which means more weeks of weekend O<sub>3</sub> effect—to about 40-45 weeks (80-90%) of the year. In short, the results of this study indicate an interplay between linear and nonlinear behavior in the chemistry of O<sub>3</sub> production and a shifting more towards the nonlinear side in the urban site, leading to increased weekend effect over this region in the future. Data obtained in this study are needed for comparing with O<sub>3</sub> variation observed over this region during the presented study period. Long-term data analysis of O<sub>3</sub> and its

precursor gases, as well as modeling studies, are required for confirmation of results obtained in this study, as well.

## CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions may be drawn from the presented study results. Ozone concentration is higher on weekend over tropical rural and urban sites in India, where ozone production processes are NO<sub>x</sub>-limited. Moderate to intense weekend ozone effect is observed in summer and winter at both sites. The possible cause of weekend ozone effect is related to variations in VOC sensitivity, and to reductions in NO<sub>x</sub> concentration (Qin *et al.*, 2004). The weekend ozone effect is more pronounced at the urban site as compared to rural, which indicates that the urban environment is shifting towards VOC-limited conditions for ozone production in the growing cities. The interplay between linear and nonlinear (mixed) behavior in the chemistry of O<sub>3</sub> production and a shifting towards the nonlinear side suggest near-future increases in weekend effect over this region.

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