

Contribution from Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology

REAL TIME SIMULATIONS OF SURFACE CIRCULATIONS BY A SIMPLE OCEAN MODEL

by

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Real Time Simulations of Surface Circulations by a Simple Ocean Model

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Abstract

Ocean models will be fully proved to be well formulated once they reproduce simulations that are totally consistent with the observed circulations. We present here the Simple Reduced Gravity Ocean model, which simulates daily upper layer circulations of TIO[†] over the region 35E to 115E and 24S to 23N. Model simulated surface currents are obtained by using daily NCEP surface forcings. These computed currents are validated over 19 different positions of TIO viz. over Somali region, west equatorial region, central tropical region, east equatorial region and south bay of Bengal. For this purpose observations of WOCE (World Ocean Circulation Experiment) from six cruise (Research Vessels Knorr and Meteor) during January to October 1995 are used. It is found that model simulated currents are in qualitative agreement with observations but the magnitudes of model currents are 30% under estimated which is mainly because observed currents are about 25-35 meter depth and model simulated currents are depth averaged upper layer (100 mtr) currents. Also, a mesoscale double gyre structure in a diffusive stage simulated by the model during the 1st week of August 1995 is validated with the WOCE observations. The study clearly indicates that model simulated surface currents are a first - order estimate in the data sparse regions.

Keywords: Daily surface circulation, Reduced gravity model, Slice modeling, Twin Gyres, Tropical Indian Ocean.

1.Introduction

The ocean is now well recognized to play a dominant role in climate system. Wind driven upper circulation gives rise to massive, near surface flows such as the Gulf Stream and Kuroshio and Antarctic circumpolar currents. Actual circulation is much more subtle and interesting according to Carlwunsch (2000), yet the ocean has been very much undermeasured for most of the history of ocean science. An unparalleled, united and the first truly global scientific undertaking attempt to understand (and eventually predict) the role played by the oceans in the earth's climate is the World Ocean Circulation Experiment (WOCE) designed by the WCRP (World Climate Research Program multinational research effort established in the 1970's). WOCE has undoubtedly proved that the ocean is turbulent and highly variable Quadfasel (2002). Adequate observations are a prerequisite to test, accept and refute hypothesis, theories and models. Ocean numerical models have become quite realistic as recognized by Semnter (1995) in simulating the seasonal and interannual large-scale circulations.

The basin scale Reduced Gravity 1½ layer ocean model has been proven to simulate realistic circulations on both monthly and seasonal scales as seen by Behera et al (1996, 1998) and Potemera et al (1991). We found that this model does exceptionally well in simulating the surface circulations of the TIO, with the interannual daily NCEP winds, as verified with the observational ADCP (Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler) results of WOCE (e.g.R/V Meteor, Knorr etc.) for a period January-October 1995. It is interesting to note from the daily climatologically simulated currents that there exist westward moving Twin Mesoscale gyres on either side of the equator near central equatorial Indian Ocean during midmonsoon months. WOCE observations are found to be very useful to validate the dissipating stage of such gyres during the 1st week of August 1995. It is now being realized that very simple models, which can be run on relatively inexpensive computers, can provide results different from, but just as useful as those produced by high resolution simulations, Triendl (2002).

It is also a fact that regional and simple models provide insights into understanding minute phenomena when daily forcings are taken into consideration. In the present study model details, data & methodology in brief and validation of model simulated surface currents are discussed. Finally along with the conclusions we suggest a simple method of "slice modeling" that would help to use our model on a global scale.

2. The model details

The model used in this study has one active layer, overlying a deep motionless inactive layer, i.e., zero pressure gradient in the lower layer that effectively filters the fast barotropic mode. The model equations are based on vertically integrated shallow water equations over a layer, assuming no vertical shear in horizontal fields.

The model equations in Cartesian co-ordinate are:

$$U_{t} + (UU/H)_{x} + (UV/H)_{y} - fV + (g'/2)(H^{2})_{x} = A_{H} \nabla^{2} (U) + \tau_{xz} / \rho_{1}$$
 (1)

$$V_t + (UV/H)_x + (VV/H)_y + fU + (g'/2)(H^2)_y = A_H \nabla^2(V) + \tau_{yz} / \rho_1$$
 (2)

$$H_t + U_x + V_y = We (3)$$

Where U and V are zonal and meridional components of transport obtained from vertically integrating upper layer velocity field, f is the Coriolis parameter. H is the upper layer thickness, $g' = g (\rho_2 - \rho_1)/\rho_2$ is the reduced gravity. A_H is the horizontal eddy viscosity coefficient and τ_{xz} ' τ_{yz} ' are the components of the wind stress applied as a body force. w_e is a source term representing entrainment from deep motionless layer to the upper active layer. This entrainment is introduced only to prevent the interface from surfacing that happens when a small initial upper layer thickness is considered. This term is positive for upper layer when the layer thickness becomes less than a pre-set minimum depth Hmin. The term is determined through a simple function as suggested by McCreary and Kundu (1988). The effect of this entrainment on the upper layer density, momentum and kinetic energy balance has been neglected. It is assumed that the entrained water engulfed into the upper layer, has zero velocity and is instantaneously adjusted to the density ρ_1 . The values of various parameters and constants used in this study are listed in the Table 1.

Parameters		Symbol	Value
Reduced gravity		g'	0.03ms ⁻²
Initial upper layer thickness		Но	100 m
Minimum upper layer thickness		Hmin	75 m
Grid length		ΔX and ΔY	28 km
Time step		Δt	30 min
Density (air)		ρ_a	1.2 kg m^{-3}
Density(water)		ρ_1	1026 kg m ⁻³
Drag coefficient		CD	1.25*10 ⁻³
Initial phase speed		Co= (g'Ho) 1/2	2.45 ms ⁻¹
Entrainment time	τ_e		8 hr
Eddy viscosity coefficient	A_H		2250 m ² s ⁻¹

Table 1. Parameters used in the model.

The model equations are solved numerically on a finite difference mesh staggered in space (Arakawa C-grid) and integrated with respect to time using leapfrog finite-difference scheme. An Euler scheme is applied at every 49th step to eliminate the spurious growth that usually arises due to time splitting in leapfrog scheme. The horizontal domain used in the model extends from 35°E to 115°E and from 24°S to 23°N (Fig.1). Boundary conditions are no slip (U = V = 0) at land boundaries and modified radiation boundary condition by Camerlengo and O'Brien (1980) and Jensen (1990) is applied at the open boundaries. The reduced gravity model has realistically simulated most of the circulation features in the Indian Ocean as referred by Luther *et al.* (1985), Simmons *et al.* (1988), Luther and O'Brien (1989).

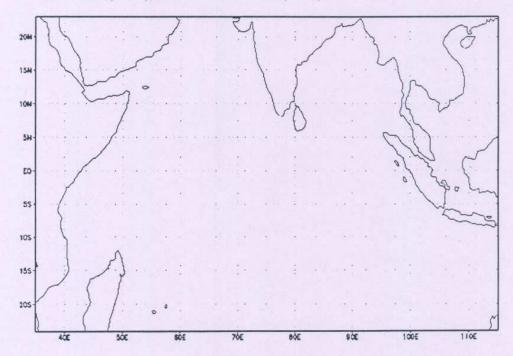


Fig.1. The Tropical Indian Ocean Model geometry.

3.Data and Methodology

The model is integrated by using daily climatology of NCEP winds from 1992-1998 and the spin up time to reach the steady state is 10 years. Model is further integrated from Jan 1992 to Dec1998 using daily interannual surface forcings. WOCE had deployed R/V to record the various parameters (of which surface circulations was one) over the tropical Indian Ocean during Jan to October 1995,hence the model simulations for the year 1995 have been considered for validation. Observations over19 different positions viz. over Somali region, west equatorial region, central tropical region, east equatorial region and south bay of Bengal are used to validate the model simulations. The cruise details like the Cruise name, start date, End date, Longitude range and Latitude range are given in the table below.

Case No.	Cruise Name (R/V)*	Start Date	End Date	Longitude Range	Latitude Range
Case 1	KNORR	1995/01/24	1995/03/05	079.67E-115.75E	32.05S-19.76N
Case 2	KNORR	1995/03/12	1995/04/14	079.99E-115.37E	34.01S-02.85N
Case 3	METEOR	1995/06/08	1995/07/10	050.00E-059.49E	04.54S-16.93N
Case 4	KNORR	1995/07/15	1995/08/23	051.42E-065.54E	20.12S-26.42N
Case 5	METEOR	1995/09/22	1995/10/27	058.53E-068.63E	10.46S-23.85N
Case 6	KNORR	1995/09/30	1995/10/13	079.62E-097.55E	04.50N-09.99N

Table 2. The cruise details of the WOCE ships.

^{*}R/V-Research vessel

4. Results and discussion

4(a) Validation of Model simulations.

We begin with the validation results. The observed currents from all the WOCE cruises considered here, are 25 to 35m depth. Model simulated currents are compared with three positions of all six cases of cruises. The tracks of 6 cruises are shown in Fig.2, the locations are marked from a to r. The detailed comparison is provided below.

Case 1 as seen in fig.3: from 24/01/1995 to 5/3/1995 (East Indian Ocean)

- (a) Around 1st march at 9N-88E a westward movement of the surface currents on the eastern side of the Sri Lankan island is noticed in both the model simulations and WOCE results.
- (b) Around 24th Feb at 3N 95E a North Eastward movement is recorded as well as simulated near Kepulanuan Banyak.
- (c) Around 9th Feb. 1995 between Eq-5N and at 92E the surface currents show a strong North of Northwest movement and are perfectly matching with simulations.

<u>Case 2</u> in fig.4: from 12/3/1995 to 14/4/1995(Mid South Indian Ocean)

- (d) Around the 16th March 1995 at 1S and 80E the WOCE results show a Westward movement of the surface currents and model simulations suggest the same.
- (e) On the 21st March 1995 at 10S-81E westward movement of the surface currents with lesser magnitudes is recorded as well as simulated.
- (f) On 26th March 1995 near 20S -80E Southwest movement of the surface currents with low magnitudes is recorded. The simulated currents agree not only with directions but also with magnitudes.

Case 3 in fig.5: from 8/6/1995 to 10/7/1995 (Somalian Gyres)

- (g) Around 4th June1995 at 3S-58E Eastward currents are observed just above Seychelles and in this case the model currents are exactly simulated.
- (h) Around 9th June 1995 at 1S-53E Southeast surface currents detected in the Owen fracture zone and similar currents are seen in the model currents.
- (i) Around 14th June 1995 at 4N-52E strong southwest currents are simulated in the model results and are matching exactly with the WOCE observations.

Case 4 in fig.6: from 15/7/1995 to 23/8/1995(Somalian Region)

(j) Around 14th July 1995 at 20S-55E southwest currents with low magnitudes are detected along Mauritius trench and simulations are in good agreement.

- (k) Around 13th August 1995 at 9N-64E South East currents with low magnitudes are detected in the south Arabian basin / west equatorial Indian Ocean as seen in both the results.
- (I) Around 18th August 1995 at 17N-61E South East currents with low magnitudes are observed in the Gulf of Masira and the simulated current has low magnitude in this case.

<u>Case 5</u> in fig.7: from 22/9/1995 to 27/10/1995 (Somalian Region)

(m) Around on 17th Oct 1995 at 8N-64E Southwestward turning currents with very low magnitudes are noticed both in the observations and in the model results, along the Carlsberg ridge.

(n) Between22nd and 23rd Oct 1995 Eq-3N along 62.5E very strong South Eastward currents simulated by the model are in total agreement with the

observed currents.

(o) Around 0n 27th Oct 1995 at 10S-59E Southwest currents are detected and simulated, by WOCE and by the model respectively.

Case 6 in fig.8: from 30/9/1995 to 13/10/1995(South Bay Of Bengal)

- (p) Around 2nd Oct 1995 at 10N, 90E WOCE results show currents moving off the Dondra Head North of North Eastwards rather with higher magnitudes. This is well simulated by the model.
- (q) On 7th Oct 1995 at 10N-88E we see strong northeast currents in the Andaman Sea both in the observations and model results.
- (r) On 12th Oct 1995 at 5N-82E Northeast currents are detected by WOCE and are again well simulated by the model.

From the above discussions it can be said that the model does simulate the observed currents with a reasonably good accuracy, except near the coast. Even though the directions of the surface currents tally completely, the magnitudes (as seen in the figure: at the bottom of each panel) of the simulated currents are found to be 30% less than the observed currents. This is easily seen from the case 5(a) in which the model currents have a magnitude of 10cm/s where as the observations show 30 to 40cm/s, as denoted by the magnitudes scales. Same is found for all the other validations. This is expected since the WOCE observations are taken at depth of 25-35m where as the model currents are upper layer depth averaged.

4. (b) Validation of Mesoscale gyres.

Qualitative features of a mesoscale double gyre structure in the model simulations also tally with the WOCE observations. The observations of R/V Malcom Baldridge in the TIO near 64E-70E,Eq-5N for 3/08/1995(Fig 9(a)) presented with the zoomed figure for the same region Fig.9 (b) support the model simulated currents for the same day using NCEP forcing (Fig 9(c)).

5. Conclusions

Comparison of the model simulated daily currents and WOCE observations clearly indicate that the model performs extremely well over tropical Indian Ocean. The model simulations match qualitatively with the WOCE results in the sense that the directions are consistent but the model underestimates the magnitudes by 30%. This is expected because the model currents are depth averaged where as the WOCE currents are recorded between 25 to 35m. The model is also able to simulate the observed mesoscale phenomena like the twin gyres that are found to occur in the TIO during the midmonsoon months. In view of these results it can be said that if one wishes to study the surface circulations over the data sparse regions (in the open ocean), this model could be used with confidence for qualitative understanding. Further, this simple model can be used to study surface circulations over the other parts of the globe by changing the boundary conditions. It is well known that Tropical Meteorology is different from Extra tropical Meteorology and to understand air sea interactions for the study of Tropical climate, observations over the Tropical Ocean are very much essential, with this point of consideration it may be useful to consider a "slice modeling" technique, in which the global ocean can be sliced into smaller regions and this model can be separately applied over them. To obtain the upper layer circulation over the entire globe over certain time period, the model-simulated circulation over different small regions, which can cover entire globe, can be analyzed. With this type of experiment one can study the global ocean circulation with reasonably good accuracy using simple ocean model that requires less computer time and memory as compared to the use of GCM's. The resolution of the model can be made finer to simulate small scale features, as the influence of meso-scale process on large-scale processes is just beginning to emerge, but may lead to a radical change in ocean modeling as proposed by Quadfasel (2002).

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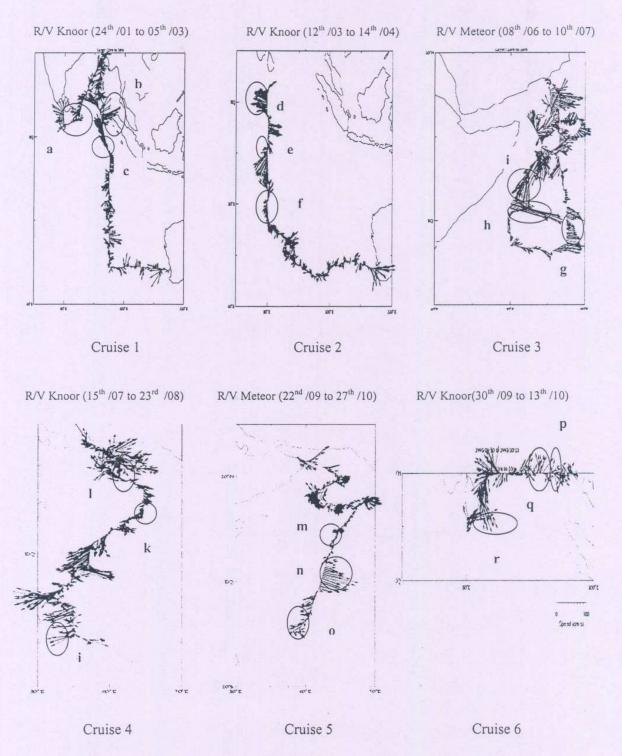


Fig 2. The tracks of the six cruises being considered for validation, the enclosed circles denote the points (a to r) with which the model simulations are compared during the year 1995, the dates are indicated on the top of each panel (for details see Table 2).

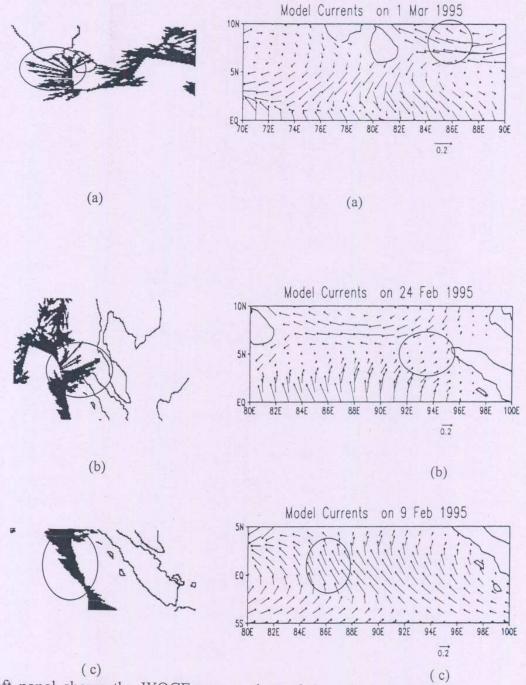


Fig.3. Left panel shows the WOCE vector plots of the currents, the Right panel shows the model simulations as a, b and c (case 1).

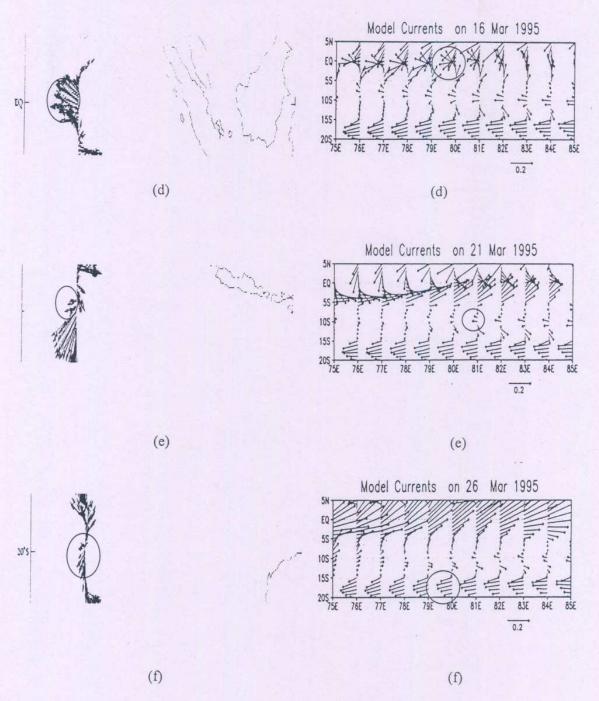


Fig.4. Same as fig.3 except for the case 2 and for d, e and f.

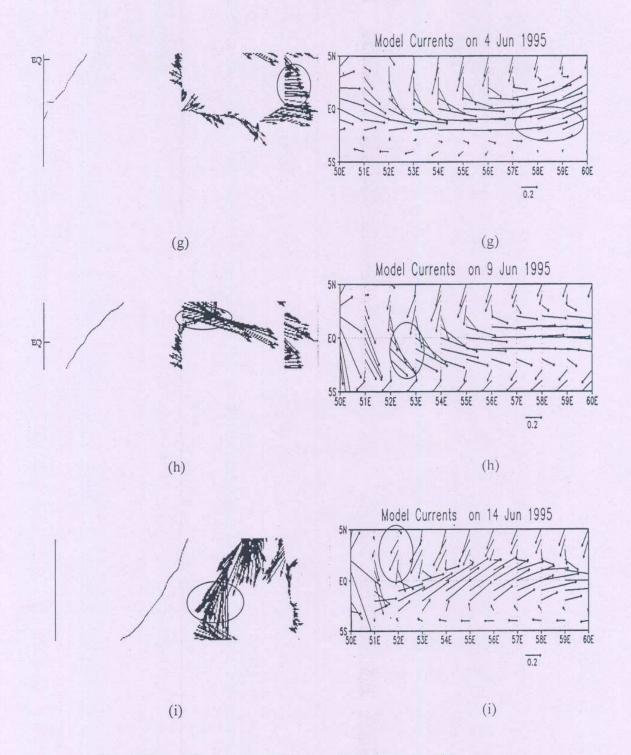


Fig.5. Same as fig.3 except for the case 3 and for g, h and h.

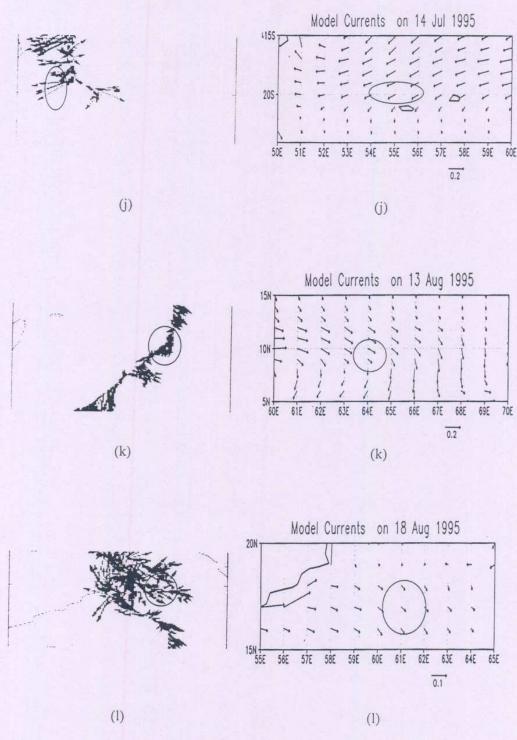


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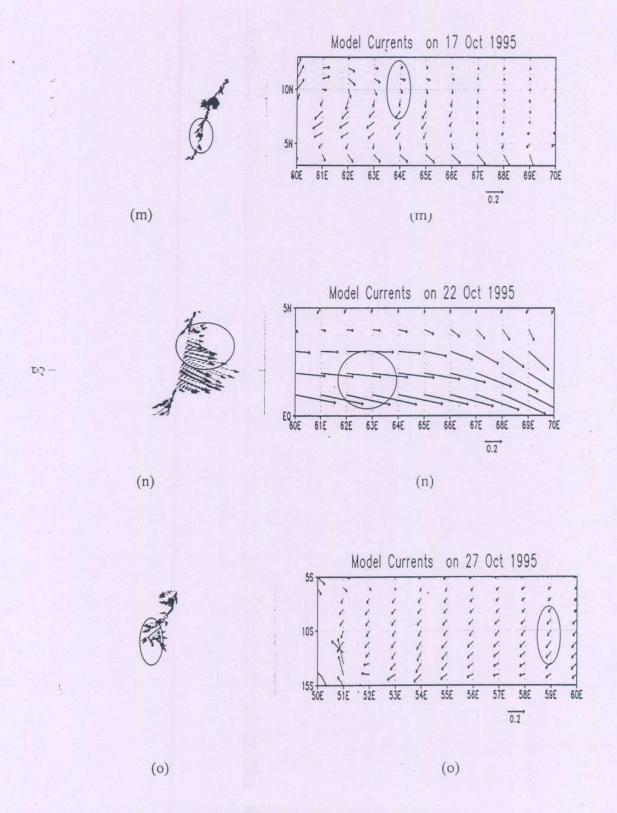


Fig.7. Same as fig.3 except for the case 5 and for m, n and o.

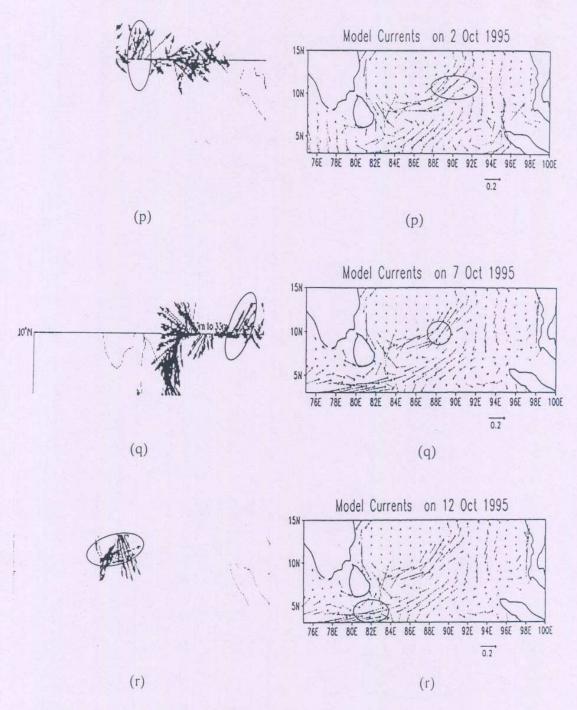


Fig.8. Same as fig.3 except for the case 6 and for p, q and r.

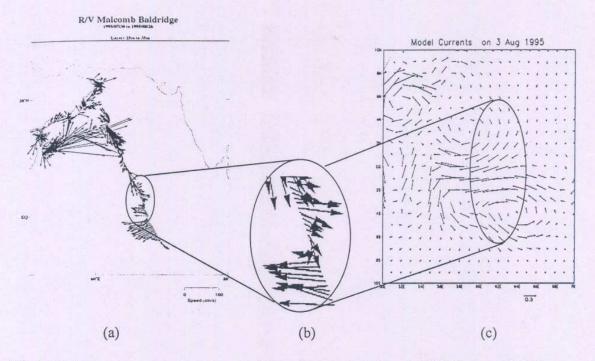


Fig.9. (a) Is the vector plots of surface circulations (25m to 35m) from the WOCE along 50E-80E, 10S-30N during July – August 1995. (b) A zoomed view (65E-70E,Eq-5N) for 3/08/1995 (c) The model simulated surface currents along 64E-70E,Eq-5N for 3/08/1995.

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