

Research Note

DOI : 10.15740/HAS/AJSS/11.1/238-242

Rationality judgment of traditional soil reclamation and soil fertility practices for sustainable agriculture by farm women

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Received : 28.01.2016; Accepted : 25.05.2016

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Key words : Rationality judgment, Traditional soil reclamation, Soil fertility practices

How to cite this article : Chawla, Seema and Bhan, Chander (2016). Rationality judgment of traditional soil reclamation and soil fertility practices for sustainable agriculture by farm women. *Asian J. Soil Sci.*, 11 (1) : 238-242 : DOI : 10.15740/HAS/AJSS/11.1/238-242.

Farm women are the backbone of Indian culture. Eighty per cent of the economically active women are engaged in activities of sowing, transplanting, weeding, manuring, harvesting, threshing and storage etc. In true sense, farm women are the storehouse of indigenous knowledge and experience with respect to agriculture, which can form very good base for further development. Women can be extremely useful in identifying local farm resources, an aspect critical for success of agricultural production. They are diligent in showing the ways to develop traditional agricultural practices and strategies appropriate for local situations. There is an urgent need to blend modern scientific knowledge and the indigenous agricultural technologies to draw a line between the popular superstitions from rational indigenous technologies, so the later one deserve to be encouraged through scientific study and research. Higher productivity, cost effectiveness, non-polluting, hazardless ness, easy availability, stability, safety and sustainability are the basic characteristics of traditional agricultural practices, which

should be strengthened by scientific explanation and documentation. Similar efforts were made in the present investigation by assessing the scientific rationality of the traditional soil reclamation and soil fertility management practices followed by farm women. The study was conducted in three selected Panchayat Samities namely Bikaner, Nokha and Lunkaransar of Bikaner district of Rajasthan. A sample of 150 farm women was drawn by using simple random sampling technique. Besides that 20 subject matter specialists (SMSs) were also selected from the relevant field of agriculture for the study purpose. Out of the identified traditional soil reclamation and soil fertility management practices, in the aspect of soil reclamation, 85 per cent of the SMSs had reported that the traditional practice of “using gypsum for reclamation of alkali soil” had a scientific rationale. Out of various indigenous practices for enhancing soil fertility, 90 per cent of the SMSs has perceived that the traditional practice of “incorporation of earthworms in bulk to make soil porous and fertile” had a scientific rationale. Thus, it