

## Knowledge of soil and water conservation practices by the farmers in Vidarbha, (Maharashtra)

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### ABSTRACT

A survey of 150 proportionately selected samples of farmers from Nandura Panchayat Samiti of Buldhana District of Vidarbha in Maharashtra revealed that a majority of farmers had medium level of extent of knowledge of soil and water conservation practices (SWCPs). Age, education, land holding, extension contact, risk preference and attitude of farmers go hand in hand with their extent of knowledge about SWCPs.

### INTRODUCTION

Land and rain water are two primary resources associated with agriculture production. As consequences of increasing pressure on land the natural balance between the soil forming and soil conserving processes has been affected to serious problem of soil erosion. The Vidarbha region of Maharashtra is spread over 11 districts, having 57.33 per cent cultivated areas, out of total geographical area of the region. The success or failure of crops, particularly under rainfed condition solely depends on the rainfall pattern. However, it was observed that the farmers in drought prone area are to go only *Kharif* crops and only few *Rabi* crops. The problem is also that heavy losses are incurred due to non-conservation of soil and water during the rainy season. The fertile land is eroded due to various reasons. There is need to study the status of farmers about soil and water conservation practices (SWCPs) in this region and to motivate them for adoption of soils and water conservation practices.

### METHODOLOGY

The present investigation was carried during the year 2004 in Nandura Panchayat Samiti of Buldhana District of Vidarbha in Maharashtra. A sample of 150 farmers was taken from ten selected villages, with the help of simple random sampling method. The data

were collected by interviewing the farmers with the help of interview schedule. An exploratory design of social research was used for this study. For the measurement of extent of knowledge, a list of soil and water conservation practices was prepared and responses of the farmers were collected on it. Extent of knowledge was ascertained on the basis of correctness or incorrectness of replies.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study as well as relevant discussion have been summarized under following heads:

#### Practice wise knowledge of SWCPs :

It is observed from the Table 1 that majority of the farmers in general were aware about intercropping (100.00%), tillage operations (100.00%), earthen bund (94.66%), brushwood dam at outlet (84.66%), gully plugging (81.33%), live fencing (64.66%), mulching (62.66%), loose boulder structure (60.00%) and dug out sunken pond (58.00%). The least known practices were on contour sowing, underground drains, contour bunds, vegetative bunds, cement plug, live check dam, contour vegetative hedges, overseeding of grasses and use of soil amendment. However, none of the farmers was aware about graded bund and vegetative filter strips

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