Land suitability evaluation in yaadhalli-1 microwatershed of Yadgir taluk and District of Karnataka, India, using remote sensing and geographical information system (GIS) tools

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.22271/chemi.2021.v9.i1ad.11539

Abstract

In present investigation, five soil series were identified and mapped into eleven mapping units using GIS technique in Yaadhalli-1 microwatershed of Yadgir Taluk and District of Karnataka, India. The soils were varied from deep to very deep in depth, sandy clay loam to sandy clay in texture, very gently sloping, moderate erosion and non gravelly in nature. These soils were grouped into land capability class II (87%) and IV (2%) with limitations of soil characteristics and erosion. Land suitability evaluation showed a maximum area under highly suitable (S1) land for growing agricultural (sorghum, sunflower, Bengal gram and cotton) and horticultural (brinjal, onion, Bhendi, musambi, lime and custard apple) crops followed by moderately suitable (Class S2) land with minor limitations of texture, rooting depth, drainage and calcareousness. The marginally suitable (Class S3) land covers a minimum area with major limitations of rooting depth, graviellness, texture and calcareousness. Currently not suitable (Class N1) land covers a negligible area with severe limitations of rooting depth and graviellness. The results of this study could be used to provide the baseline information needed for mapping specific soil resource constraints for sustainable production of these crops in the study area. Therefore, the integration of remote sensing & GIS techniques could be envisaged as a laudable resource sustainable approach to model the growth of these crops in order to enhance profitable land use planning decision support for sustainable crop production in the study area.

Keywords: Soil series, mapping units, land capability class, land suitability evaluation, crops

Introduction

Land evaluation is defined as “the process of assessment of land performance when used for specific purposes”. The FAO, land evaluation framework has been the primary method practiced worldwide to address local, regional and national land use planning (FAO, 1976) [3]. The increased necessity for food production and the limited resources stimulate a need for sophisticated methods to aid decision-makers in their role to both preserve highly suitable lands and satisfy producers demands for enhanced profits (Ali Bagherzadeh and Daneshvar, 2011) [1]. The soil and land resource units (soil phases) were assessed for their suitability for growing food, fodder, fibre and other horticulture crops by following the procedure as outlined in FAO, 1976 and 1983 [13, 4]. Crop requirements were developed for each of the crop from the available research data and also by referring to Naidu et al. (2006) [9] and Natarajan et al. (2015) [10]. The soil and land characteristics were matched with the crop requirement to arrive at the crop suitability. Soil site characteristics identifies the degree of suitability for land use which aids in planning expansion of area under a suitable site specific crop (Singh et al., 1998 and Sharma et al., 2001) [16, 15]. Knowledge of soil resources with respect to their spatial distribution; characteristics, potentials, limitations and their suitability for alternate land uses helps in formulating strategies to obtain higher productivity on sustained basis. Rapid evolution of satellite remote sensing and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) has made possible the development of new techniques for facilitating mapping of natural resources. Remote sensing and GIS application in soil resource mapping enables the study of soils in spatial domain, in time and in a cost effective manner.
For deriving crop suitability of a particular area detailed soil information is essential. By using detailed soil survey data we have arrived with soil mapping units. Assigning soil site suitability criteria to particular mapping units, soil suitability maps have been generated in the GIS environment (Chandrakala et al., 2019) [2]. The sustainable crop production system depends on developing and adaptation of ideal land use plan based on soil quality and its constraints for plant growth. Using the above criteria, the soil map units of the microwatershed were evaluated and land suitability maps for crops were generated. Hence, the detailed study was carried out with the objective of land suitability evaluation in Yaadhalli-1 microwatershed of Yadgir Taluk and District of Karnataka, India by using remote sensing and GIS tools.

Materials and Methods

Details of the study area

Yaadhalli-1 microwatershed is located in the northern part of Karnataka in Yadgir Taluk & District, Karnataka State (Fig.1). It comprises of Hattakuni, Horunacha, Chamanahalli, Bandhalli and Yaddalli villages. It lies between 16° 48’ and 16° 51’ North latitudes and 77° 08’ and 77° 10’ East longitudes covering an area of about 702 ha. It is about 12 km from Yadgir town and is surrounded by Hattakuni village on the north, Horunacha and Chamanahalli villages on the western side, Yaddalli village on the eastern side and Bandhalli village on the southern side. Geology of the area is granite gneiss of the Archaen age. Elevation ranges from 379-403 m above MSL. Climate is semiarid drought-prone type. Total annual rainfall of 866 mm and mean maximum and minimum temperature are 34 °C and 22 °C. In this microwatershed agriculture is the fundamental livelihood activity among the people. Study area is characterized by granite gneiss landscape. The detailed soil survey was conducted as per the guidelines given in Soil Survey Manual, 1993 [17]. Inceptisols, Alfisols and Vertisols form the major soil type. The physico-chemical (Table 1) properties (horizon-wise) were estimated by following the standard procedures outlined by Sarma et al., 1987 [13]. Five soil series were identified in the study area and mapped into 11 mapping units as phases of soil series. Weighted mean of each property was calculated and soil-site characteristics of different soil units were obtained as shown in Table 2. Land capability map and soil-site suitability maps were prepared from ArcGIS10.2.2 software.

Structure of the Classification for Soil suitability Evaluation

The land suitability classification is grouped into orders, classes, subclasses and units. At the order level, the land units are grouped into suitable or not suitable based on kinds of suitability for the selected land use. The orders are further divided into classes based on degrees of suitability and the classes are further divided into subclasses based on the kinds of limitations, subclasses are divided into land suitability units based on specific management requirements (Sys, 1993; NBSS&LUP, 1994 and Naidu et al., 2006) [18, 8, 9]. A brief description of the orders and classes used in the suitability assessment for major crops grown in the area is given below.

Order S (Suitable)

Class S1 (Highly suitable) - Land having no or slight limitations for sustainable use.
Class S2 (Moderately suitable) - Land with moderate limitations for sustained use.
Class S3 (Marginally suitable) Land with severe limitations for sustained use.
Order N (Not Suitable)
Class N1 (Currently not suitable) - Land with severe or very severe limitations that may be overcome in time but cannot be corrected with existing knowledge at current acceptable cost.
Class N2 (Permanently not suitable) - Land having limitations that appear so severe as to preclude any possibility of use of the land.
Classes S2 and S3 were further divided into sub classes based on the specific limitations encountered in the area. There are no subclasses within suitability class S1. The specific limitations affecting crop production in the area are indicated below with their symbols.

Climate: temperature, rainfall total and distribution, dry months and growing period
Topography
Erosion
Soil depth or rooting condition
Soil texture (sandy or heavy clay)
Coarse fragments
Soil fertility (calcareousness)
Nutrient status (CEC/BS)
Drainage
Flood
Depth to water table
Limitations are indicated in lower case letters after the class symbol. For example moderately suitable land with texture as a limitation is designated as S2t. Normally two and sometimes three limitations are indicated at sub class level. The Arabic numbers, wherever used, indicates land suitability units, after the limitation symbol.

Land capability classification: Land capability classification is an interpretative grouping of soil map units (soil phases) mainly based on inherent soil characteristics, external land features and environmental factors that limit the use of land for agriculture, pasture, forestry, or other uses on a sustained basis (IARI, 1971) [6]. The land and soil characteristics used to group the land resources in an area into various land capability classes, subclasses and units. Based on soil properties, the soils of Yaadahalli-1 microwatershed are grouped under 2 land capability classes (II & IV) and 4 land capability subclasses. An entire area of 626 ha (89%) in the microwatershed is suitable for agriculture. About 76 ha (11%) area is covered by others (water body & habitation) (Fig. 2).

Results and Discussion

Land suitability assessment for major crops adopted to the area
Using the soil site suitability criteria (NBSS&LUP, 1994 & Naidu et al., 2006) [8, 9] land resource of the Yaadahalli-1 Microwatershed was assessed for their suitability for the following crops.

Agricultural crops: Sorghum, Sunflower, Bengal gram & Cotton
Horticultural crops: Brinjal, Onion, Bhendi, Musambi, Lime & Custard apple

Fig 2: Land Capability map of Yaadahalli-1 Microwatershed
**Table 1: Physico-chemical properties of the soils of Yaadahalli-1 Microwatershed of Yadgir Taluk and District of Karnataka, India**

| Depth cm | Horizon | Particle size distribution (% of 2 mm) | pH (1:2.5) | EC (1:2.5) | OC (%) | Exchangeable bases [Cmol (p) kg⁻¹] | CEC [Cmol (p) kg⁻¹] | CEC/clay | Base saturation (%) |
|----------|---------|--------------------------------------|------------|------------|--------|----------------------------------|------------------|-----------|---------------------|
|          |         | Sand (2.0-0.05 mm) | Silt (0.05-0.002 mm) | Clay (<0.002 mm) |          | Ca | Mg | K | Na |          |
| 0-10     | Ap      | 88.43 | 5.15 | 6.42 | 7.16 | 0.117 | 0.48 | 2.83 | 1.50 | 0.15 | 0.29 | 4.90 | 0.76 | 97 |
| 10-30    | Bw1     | 58.47 | 7.24 | 34.29 | 6.91 | 0.040 | 0.36 | 10.64 | 5.43 | 0.10 | 0.26 | 17.80 | 0.52 | 92 |
| 30-50    | Bw2     | 51.43 | 12.67 | 35.90 | 8.17 | 0.182 | 0.24 | - | - | 0.12 | 0.22 | 19.90 | 0.55 | 100 |
| 50-90    | Bw3     | 49.89 | 13.64 | 36.47 | 8.60 | 0.148 | 0.20 | - | - | 0.13 | 0.16 | 19.70 | 0.54 | 100 |
| 0-9      | Ap      | 81.23 | 12.97 | 5.80 | 8.20 | 0.399 | 0.44 | - | - | 0.16 | 0.38 | 4.90 | 0.84 | 100 |
| 9-20     | A2      | 76.82 | 16.19 | 6.98 | 8.44 | 0.075 | 0.29 | - | - | 0.05 | 0.35 | 4.90 | 0.70 | 100 |
| 20-46    | Bw1     | 42.43 | 17.43 | 40.15 | 9.39 | 0.451 | 0.32 | - | - | 0.12 | 5.22 | 20.77 | 0.52 | 100 |
| 46-90    | Bw2     | 54.51 | 16.56 | 28.93 | 9.75 | 0.616 | 0.24 | - | - | 0.12 | 5.72 | 16.56 | 0.57 | 100 |
| 90-110   | Bw3     | 53.69 | 11.00 | 35.30 | 9.72 | 0.725 | 0.24 | - | - | 0.14 | 6.84 | 19.76 | 0.56 | 100 |
| 0-11     | Ap      | 58.94 | 20.74 | 20.32 | 8.31 | 0.33 | 0.46 | - | - | 0.45 | 0.47 | 20.57 | 1.01 | 100 |
| 11-30    | Bw1     | 55.52 | 19.32 | 25.16 | 9.25 | 0.20 | 0.31 | - | - | 0.19 | 1.40 | 23.98 | 0.95 | 100 |
| 30-53    | Bw2     | 53.95 | 19.15 | 26.90 | 9.78 | 0.40 | 0.19 | - | - | 0.16 | 1.53 | 24.53 | 0.91 | 100 |
| 53-117   | Bw3     | 52.68 | 19.51 | 27.81 | 9.94 | 0.88 | 0.23 | - | - | 0.18 | 9.09 | 24.31 | 0.87 | 100 |
| 117-160  | Bw4     | 49.95 | 17.27 | 32.79 | 9.98 | 0.93 | 0.15 | - | - | 0.24 | 11.09 | 28.27 | 0.86 | 100 |

**Land Suitability for Agricultural crops**

The crop requirements for growing sorghum, sunflower, bengalgram and cotton were matched with the soil-site characteristics (Table 2) of the soils of the microwatershed and a land suitability map for growing sorghum, sunflower, bengalgram and cotton was generated. The area extent and their geographic distribution of different suitability subclasses in the microwatershed are given in Fig. 3, 4, 5 and 6.

The suitable assessment for agricultural crops in Yaadahalli-1 microwatershed showed a maximum area under highly suitable (S1) land for growing sorghum (586 ha), sunflower (409 ha), bengalgram (586 ha) and cotton (409 ha) followed by moderately suitable (Class S2) land. They have minor limitations of texture, rooting depth, drainage and calcareousness. Sehgal (1996) reported that, the factors that influence sorghum yield are rainfall, temperature, slope, base saturation, CaCO₃, cation exchange capacity and texture. For Cotton the yield was significantly influenced by rainfall because of deep to very deep in depth, sandy clay loam to sandy clay texture with less gravelliness, very gently sloping land and moderate erosion.

**Land Suitability for Horticultural crops**

The crop requirements for growing brinjal, onion, bhendi, musambi, lime and custard apple were matched with the soil-site characteristics (Table 2) of the soils of the microwatershed and a land suitability map for growing brinjal, onion, bhendi, musambi, lime and custard apple was generated. The area extent and their geographic distribution of different suitability subclasses in the microwatershed are given in Fig. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12.

Whiley (1984) reported that, the soil depth and soil reactions influence on growth and development of horticultural crops. The land Suitability for horticultural crops in Yaadahalli-1 microwatershed showed that maximum area comes under highly suitable (S1) land for growing brinjal (204 ha), onion (222 ha), bhendi (600 ha), musambi (409 ha), lime (409 ha) and custard apple (605 ha) followed by moderately suitable (Class S2) land with minor limitations of texture, rooting depth and calcareousness. The marginally suitable (Class S3) land covers a minimum area with major limitations of rooting depth, gravelliness and texture. Currently not suitable (Class N1) land covers a negligible area with severe limitations of rooting depth and gravelliness. Similar findings were also reported by Mahesh Kumar et al. (2019) and Geetha et al. (2017). Majority of the soils in the microwatershed is suitable for horticultural crops due to deep to very deep in depth, sandy clay loam to sandy clay in texture, less gravelliness, maximum available water content, very gently sloping land with moderate erosion enhancement for growing of this crops.
Remote sensing and GIS based cadastral level detailed LRI help to derive land suitability and land capability at parcel level for improved agricultural and horticultural planning and management (Rajesh et al., 2016).
Fig 5: Land Suitability map of Bengal gram

Fig 6: Land Suitability map of Cotton
Fig 7: Land Suitability map of Brinjal

Fig 8: Land Suitability map of Onion
Fig 9: Land Suitability map of Bhendi

Fig 10: Land Suitability map of Musambi
Fig 11: Land Suitability map of Lime

Fig 12: Land Suitability map of Custard Apple
Conclusion

It can be concluded that, the soils were deep to very deep in depth, sandy clay loam to sandy clay in texture, less graveliness, maximum available water content, very gently sloping with moderate erosion. The GIS tool was effectively utilized at the study area for land capability and crop suitability classifications. The land capability classification of the entire study area placed under class II (87%) of good cultivable land. The land suitability for different agriculture crops. It is however to be noted that a given soil may be culturable land. The land suitability for different agriculture suitability criteria for different crops, NBSS and LUP, Proceedings National mee-2019;7(1):801-811.

Table 2: Soil-Site Characteristics of Yaadahalli-1 Microwatershed

| Soil Map Units | Climate (°P) | Growing period (Days) | Drainage Class | Soil depth (cm) | Soil texture | Graveliness | AWC (mm/m) | Slope (%) | Erosion | pH (dSm⁻¹) | ESP (%) | CEC (Cmol+/(p²kg⁻¹)) | BS (%) |
|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|-------------|------------|-----------|----------|-----------|---------|-------------------------|--------|
| DSBiB2         | 866          | 150                   | WD             | 25-50          | sc           | gc          | <15        | 35-60     | <50       | 1-3       | 5.93    | 0.04                    | 0.14   | 3.60                      | 73     |
| HSLiB2         | 866          | 150                   | MWD            | 75-100         | sc           | sc          | <15        | <15       | 101-150   | 1-3       | 7.16    | 0.11                    | 5.94   | 4.90                      | 97     |
| HSLiB2         | 866          | 150                   | MWD            | 75-100         | sc           | sc          | <15        | <15       | 101-150   | 1-3       | 7.16    | 0.11                    | 5.94   | 4.90                      | 97     |
| HSLiB2g2       | 866          | 150                   | MWD            | 75-100         | sl           | sc          | 35-60      | <15       | 101-150   | 1-3       | 7.16    | 0.11                    | 5.94   | 4.90                      | 97     |
| MDGmiB1        | 866          | 150                   | WD             | 100-150        | c            | scl         | <15        | <15       | >200      | 0-1       | slight  | 8.20    | 0.40                    | 3.08   | 4.90                      | 100    |
| MDctiB2        | 866          | 150                   | WD             | >150           | c            | scl         | <15        | <15       | >200      | 0-1       | slight  | 8.31    | 0.33                    | 0.90   | 20.57                     | 100    |
| MDctib2        | 866          | 150                   | WD             | >150           | sc            | scl         | <15        | <15       | >200      | 0-1       | slight  | 8.31    | 0.33                    | 0.90   | 20.57                     | 100    |
| MDctiB2        | 866          | 150                   | WD             | >150           | sc            | scl         | <15        | <15       | >200      | 0-1       | slight  | 8.31    | 0.33                    | 0.90   | 20.57                     | 100    |
| MDctib2        | 866          | 150                   | WD             | >150           | sc       | sc           | <15        | <15       | >200      | 0-1       | slight  | 8.31    | 0.33                    | 0.90   | 20.57                     | 100    |
| BMNniB2        | 866          | 150                   | WD             | >150           | c            | c           | <15        | <15       | >200      | 0-1       | slight  | 8.34    | 0.28                    | 0.65   | 52.70                     | 100    |

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