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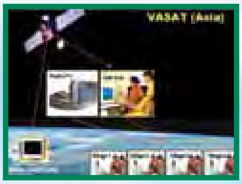


# Use of High Science Tools in Integrated Watershed Management

## Proceedings of the National Symposium

ICRISAT
Science with a human face

International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics

# Harnessing New Science Tools through IWMP to Unlock Potential of Rain-fed Agriculture

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***Abstract***

*Semi-Arid Tropics (SAT) are characterized by highly variable rainfall, poor soils, low yields and poor developmental infrastructure. Watershed management is now an accepted strategy for development of rain-fed agriculture in these areas. New science tools like remote sensing, geographical information systems (GIS), water balance, simulation modeling, information and communication technology (ICT) are currently being used very widely in irrigated and well-endowed areas. Importance of these tools in the SAT areas is now well understood and recognized. Application of new science tools in rain-fed agriculture opens up new vistas for development through integrated watershed management programs (IWMP). ICRISAT in partnership with national agricultural research systems and advanced research institutes in Asia has applied new science tools for enhancing the productivity of rain-fed systems in the SAT through science-led development.*

*The remarkable developments in space technology currently offers satellites, which provide better spatial and spectral resolutions, more frequent revisits, stereo viewing and on board recording capabilities. High spatial and temporal resolution satellite data could be effectively used for watershed management and monitoring activities at land ownership level. Techniques are also successfully used for preparing detailed thematic maps, watershed development plans and continuous monitoring of the natural resources in rain-fed areas. Synergy of GIS and Web Technology allows access to dynamic geospatial watershed information without burdening the users with complicated and expensive software.*

*Use of smart sensor network along with GIS, RS, simulation modeling and ICT opens up new opportunities for developing intelligent watershed management information systems. These tools can help in improving the rural livelihoods and contribute substantially to meet the millennium development goals of halving the number of hungry people by 2015 and achieving food security through enhanced use efficiency of scarce natural resources such as land and water in the tropical countries.*

## Introduction

Semi-Arid Tropics (SAT) are characterized by highly variable rainfall, poor soils, low yields and poor developmental infrastructure. The fragile eco-systems of these rain-fed areas also suffer from severe land degradation. Watershed management is now an accepted strategy for development of rain-fed agriculture. Watershed approach has many components to cope with biotic and aboitic stresses through resource conservation and management measures like rainwater harvesting and recycling, *in situ* moisture conservation, agroclimate-based selection of suitable crops and varieties, crop rotations, intercropping, integrated nutrient and pest management, agroforestry and income-generating activities for sustainable improvement of rural livelihoods. There is a need to undertake a comprehensive study of watersheds with respect to their selection, planning, implementation, monitoring and impact assessment through diverse techniques and modalities for the success of watershed development programs. New science tools like remote sensing, geographical information systems (GIS), water balance, simulation modeling, information and communication technology (ICT) are currently being used very widely in irrigated and well-endowed areas. Importance of these tools in the SAT areas is now well understood and recognized.

The International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) is one of the 15 Future Harvest Centers of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). ICRISAT in partnership with national agricultural research systems and advanced research institutes in Asia has applied new science tools for enhancing the productivity of rain-fed systems in the SAT through science-led development. Major partners of ICRISAT are Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture (CRIDA), National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) and State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) in India, Department of Agriculture (DoA) and Department of Land Development (DLD), Khon Kaen University (KKU) in Thailand, Yunnan Academy of Agricultural Sciences (YAAS), The Guizhou Academy of Agricultural Sciences in China and Vietnam Academy of Agricultural Sciences (VAAS) in Vietnam.

Basic requirement for successful implementation of watershed programs without sacrificing the interests of stakeholders is to assess the problems and prospects of the watershed after considering factors such as natural resources, physiography and socio-economic status. Watershed development needs a balanced participatory approach and all the stakeholders have to be involved from the planning level itself for smooth and efficient execution of the watershed related works in a timely manner. Spatial technologies play a very crucial role in watershed planning. Advances in space research have enhanced the availability of spatial and temporal data. Electronic sensors, dataloggers, portable electronic devices, Internet and communication technology are vital in the program planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation of watersheds. In tropical rain-fed areas, 80-85 per cent farmers are small farm holders cultivating < 2 ha each. To reach the millions of small farm holders spread across 3.65 million $km^2$ SAT area in Asia in sharing knowledge and information about new technologies and products to improve productivity on their farms, is indeed a gigantic task. Processing of billions of data points to translate into information and knowledge to benefit policy makers, development investors, extension and development workers and farmers has become feasible with the availability of advanced scientific tools, communication technologies and combination of one or more of such tools (Diwakar and Jayaraman 2007, Wani et al. 2008, Kaushalya et al. 2009 and Sreedevi et al. 2009).

## New Science Tools for Integrated Watershed Management

### Geographic Information System (GIS)

GIS is a tool that relates information to places. It stores spatial data in a topological framework defining the relationships between map elements (points, lines, polygons and grid cells), facilitates convenient retrieval from the spatial database and supports analysis and modeling to be displayed as digital or hardcopy maps. By visualizing different types of data from different sources using digital maps, GIS cuts across communication boundaries and can become a medium for establishing a common language between otherwise contentious or disinterested groups. The ability of GIS to integrate and spatially analyze multiple layers of information is its core capability. During the initial phases of development, GIS was extensively used for data conversion/digitization of paper maps, storing and generating map prints with little focus on spatial analysis. Present GIS technology enables 'map any where and serve any where'. There is a leap in the development of spatial analysis tools and logical processing methods. This has enabled the development of numerous spatial algorithms, spatial modeling techniques and better display and visualization of data. One such application is watershed planning, wherein these techniques are effectively used for land resources as well as water resources planning, watershed prioritization and monitoring.

Watershed-level planning requires a host of inter-related information to be generated and studied in relation to one another. GIS is used in the development of digital database, assessment of status and trends of the resources of an area/watershed and to support and assess various resource management alternatives. Spectacular developments in the field of GIS to synthesize thematic information with collateral data have not only made this technology effective and economically viable, but also an inevitable tool to arrive at sustainable development strategies for land and water resources management.

Multi-criteria spatial queries help us visualize the spatial patterns and spatial relationships to understand the phenomenon under study. With the progress in computing capabilities and availability of hardware, more functionality is added to the GIS and it has become a powerful tool for arranging and storing spatial and tabular data in a structured way. Spatial modeling is the application of analytical procedures with GIS. Models are coupled in different ways with GIS to produce spatial model outputs. GIS has perhaps the best use in the field of agriculture, as it is the most widely prevalent activity on the earth. GIS is used to understand spatial dimensions of varied problems in agriculture, especially when environmental variables like climate, soils, water, etc play a major role in production, constraints and practices. Temporal data sets need to be analyzed, interpreted, and depicted suitably for better understanding of land related issues and this need can be fulfilled by GIS.

Besides the generation and spatial analysis of data, important facet of GIS technology is speedy in public outreach. Now with the availability of Blade servers with RAID capability, which can serve data at faster rates, gigabit data transfer capabilities and Mbps Internet speeds, outreach to the world community has improved tremendously. Spatial data with on-the-fly spatial analytical capabilities is being served over Internet these days.

## Remote Sensing

Remotely sensed data provides valuable and up-to-date spatial information on natural resources and physical terrain parameters. This is a very useful and essential tool in the planning and development of watersheds embracing all natural and socio-economic facets. Although remote sensing started during Second World War period, developments in satellite remote sensing started in early seventies and have undergone significant improvements in sensors as well as spatial, spectral, temporal and radiometric resolutions. Satellite image resolutions increased from 80 m (coarse resolution- Landsat-MSS) in seventies to 20 - 36 m (medium resolution – SPOT-MLA/Landsat-TM/IRS-LISS II) in mid eighties to 0.68 – 5.8 m during late nineties (high resolution-QuickBird–PAN, MLA/IKONOS/IRS-PAN, LISS-IV, Cartosat-1,2). In tune with these developments, application of satellite data has extended from watershed level to sub-watershed and micro-watershed level (Table 1).

## Sources of the Results

Simultaneously, stereo-satellite data was also made available from SPOT – PLA, IRS 1C/1D- PAN, IKONOS and Cartosat-1/2. They enabled to develop Digital Elevation Models (DEM) for the watersheds, which is indispensable for topographic feature extraction, runoff analysis, slope stability analysis, landscape analysis, etc. DEM accuracy normally depends on base-height ratio and spatial resolution of the sensor. SPOT DEM accuracies generated from HRS imagery have absolute planimetric accuracy of 15 to 30 m and absolute elevation accuracy of 10 to 20 m (Annon. 2004). In Cartosat-1, DEM of an accuracy of 3-4 m in height was achieved where spatial resolution is 2.5 m (Srivastava et al.

**Table 1. Suitability of various RS sensors in watershed studies.**

| Sl. No | Level of study | Suitable spatial resolutions | Sensors | Application potential |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Basin level (1:250000 scale) | 50 to 150m | IRS-WiFS, AWiFS, LISS-I | Deriving overall base information on natural resources and land cover; large scale monitoring of changes |
| 2 | Watershed level (1:50000 scale) | 20 to 50m | IRS-LISS-III, SPOT-MLA, TM, ETM, | Deriving natural resources information for watershed prioritization, planning, monitoring |
| 3 | Sub/micro-watershed level (1:10000 or larger) | 0.5 to 20m | IRS-LISS-IV, SPOT-PLA, Cartosat-1 / 2, IKONOS, QuickBird, Worldview-2. | Planning and execution, monitoring watershed developmental activities, detailed account of change occurrences. Stereo data for DEM generation |

2007). CartoDEM can be used as an input for planning developmental activities in watersheds. The geometric accuracy and information content of Ortho-images and DEM provided by the Cartosat-1 can be used for delineation of watersheds boundaries at 1:25,000 and 1:50,000 scales, generation of contours at 10m interval and generating thematic maps at a scale of 1:10,000 (Krishna Murthy et al. 2008).

Besides, the latest developments in microwave interferometry from satellites like ERS-1/2 SAR, Radarsat and Envisat and laser altimetry from aerial platforms enabled faster and precise generation of DEMs. Noteworthy developments in laser altimetry and its data processing capability enabled generation of DEM with centimetre accuracy under ideal condition. Such data are being used for canal, pipeline, road and other fine spatial alignment planning works.

The high-resolution (< 6 m spatial resolution) satellite imagery (IRS-LISS IV/Cartosat – 1&2 /IKONOS/QuickBird) are useful for sub-watershed/ micro-watershed level applications like mapping infrastructure (roads/ drainage network), natural resources inventory (crops/soils groundwater potential), water resources (water bodies/natural springs/ ponds), land use (single cropped areas/double cropped areas/waste lands/fallow lands/forest cover at level 4), etc. They can be employed for disaster management at block/ village level like drought or flood damage, etc., and also for monitoring and impact assessment of the developmental activities in the micro-watersheds. NRSA (2006) had demonstrated the utility of high resolution satellite data on the above mentioned activities in six micro-watersheds under crop production systems in different agroclimatic zones in India.

Advancements also took place in spectral resolutions i.e., four spectral bands (Landsat-MSS/IRS-IA/1B/1C/1D, SPOT) to seven bands (Landsat-TM) to 14 discrete spectral bands (ASTER). Simultaneous developments in ground-based observations helped to realize the importance of recording data in numerous narrow spectral bands and led to the development of satellite based hyperspectral remote sensing (Hyperion/HySI). Hyperspectral data provides unique capabilities to discern physical and chemical properties of natural resources otherwise not possible using broadband multispectral sensors. Some of application areas in agriculture are crop stress (moisture/pest/nutrient) detection, yield prediction, soil quality and agro-environmental health assessment.

## Crop-Growth Simulation Modelling

Crop simulation models are mathematical, computer-based representations of crop growth and interaction with weather, soil and nutrients. They play important role in scientific research and resource management, and have been used to understand, observe and experiment with cropping systems. The strengths of models in general include the abilities to:

- provide a framework for understanding a system;
- evaluate long-term impact of interventions;
- provide an analysis of the risks involved in adopting a strategy;
- provide answers quickly and cost effectively than is possible with traditional experimentation.

The Decision Support System for Agrotechnology Transfer (DSSAT) is a software package integrating the effects of soil, crop phenotype, weather and management options that allows users to ask “what if” questions and simulate results on a desktop computer. The DSSAT package incorporates models of 27 different crops with new tools to facilitate creation and management of experimental, soil, and weather data files. It also includes improved application programs for seasonal and sequence analyses that assess the economic risks and environmental impacts associated with irrigation, fertilizer and nutrient management, climate change, soil carbon sequestration and precision management. Crop growth modelling software like Agricultural Production Systems Simulator (APSIM) and InfoCrop are also widely used by various researchers.

Singh et al. (2009) have studied the yield gaps of important crops in various countries by simulating potential yields of sorghum, pearl millet, maize, soybean, groundnut and chickpea using DSSAT. They used InfoCrop software for rice and cotton and APSIM for pigeonpea potential yield estimation. Results showed that the actual yields of food and other crops obtained by farmers are much below the potential yields that can be obtained with improved management. Crop yields can at least be doubled from their current levels by the promotion and adoption of existing ‘on-the-shelve’ technologies available with the national and international research institutes. The governments need to provide enabling policy environments and institutional support to promote greater adoption of new and improved technologies to benefit the poor farmers of rain-fed areas and to meet the challenge of greater food needs of future.

Singh et al. (2009) analyzed yield gaps for several crops in various countries including India, Thailand, Northern Vietnam and WANA region. Estimations of potential rain-fed yields and yield gaps in Northern Vietnam were based on simulated yields, experimental station yields and province yields – all obtained under rain-fed situation. Potential yields of soybean, groundnut and maize were simulated using DSSAT v3.5 crop models. The models were tested and validated using data of three experiments conducted at Than Ha watershed site in Hoa Binh province (Chuc et al. 2005). Rain-fed potential yields of crops were simulated using weather data of 28 years for the five locations (Vinh

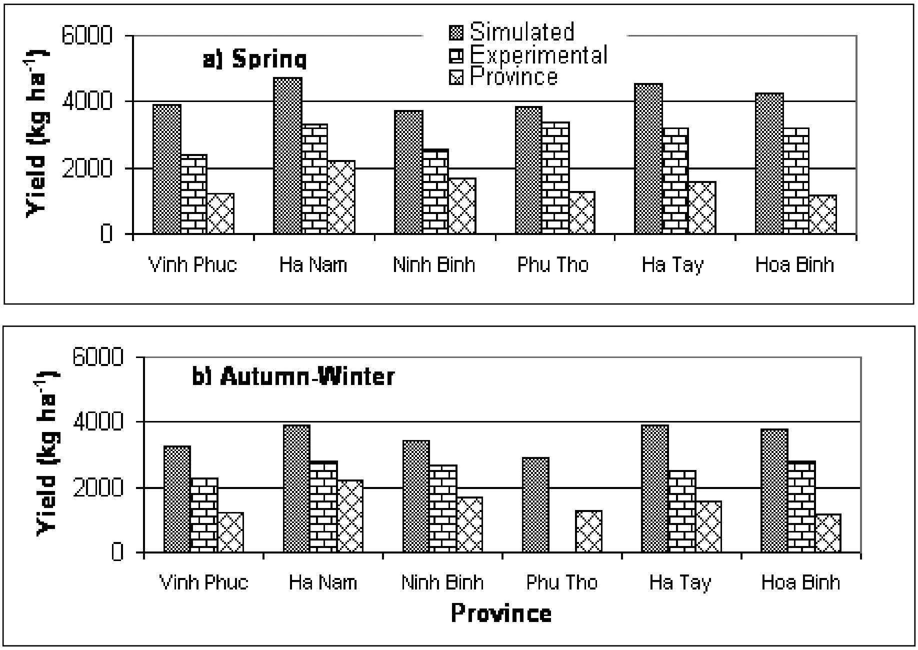


*Figure 1. Simulated potential, experimental and province mean pod yields and yield gap of rain-fed groundnut in (a) spring and (b) autumn-winter seasons at selected sites in northern Vietnam.*

Phuc, Ha Nam, Ninh Binh, Ha Tay and Phu Tho) and 10 years for the Hoa Binh (Fig 1). Long-term yield data of yield maximization trials were also available for each crop and benchmark site. These data were averaged over the time period and compared with mean simulated yields and province level mean yields for the benchmark sites to quantify the yield gaps for each crop.

Crop simulation models are also used to understand the impacts of climate change on crop growth and productivity. Cooper et al (2009) used a *factorial combination* of climate change of five different temperature increases (1, 2, 3, 4 and 5°C) and 3 different percentage changes in seasonal rainfall. (0%, +10%, and -10%) and compared the crop simulation outputs with a ‘control’ of the current climate. Their study predicted that temperature increases have greater negative impacts on crop production than relatively small changes in rainfall. They showed that the *ex ante* analyses clearly illustrate both the challenges that climate risk poses as well as the opportunities it offer.

## Field Sensors and Data Communication Devices

In watershed management, one important component is the collection and sharing of field data or ground information and integrating it into the processing and analysis of spatial data in real time, which helps in timely decision making and taking up appropriate corrective measures. Field data collection typically consists of recording geographic location, photographs of the area at the sample points, notes on soils/crops/ land use and general details in a ground truth proforma. Collecting the data and putting it to use is normally done as a sequential process with a significant amount of time delay since the same scientists perform both the tasks and the entire ground truth data collection activity is normally allowed to be completed before starting the use of data. Field data collection has undergone a number of changes from the days of hardcopy jottings on paper in the field to the use of laptops/palmtops in recent times. However, a combination of some of the recent technology trends promises to deliver significantly enhanced solutions in this area, which would benefit a wide range of users. Important technology areas impacting the field data collection process are:

**Global Positioning System (GPS)** is one the important tools that brings location awareness to any application. While collecting and using any real time field data, the location from where it was collected is very important. Now, GPS is a known electronic device to most of the tech-savvy people and became an important tool for location awareness. Several location-based and location aware applications are being developed especially in emergency management, service and utility sectors. New developments and relaxations in security related matters have helped in improving the location accuracy to better than 15m using ordinary code receivers. In differential mode, sub-metre accuracies are possible. Collection of precise weather data at watershed level and transmission on real time basis is vital for resource management as well as for improving crop productivity.

**Automatic Weather Station (AWS)** is an affordable way to obtain detailed weather information at the watershed areas. AWS records data on parameters like rainfall, wind speed and direction, humidity, temperature etc. Special sensors of particular interest can also be included in AWS, to measure soil temperature, leaf wetness etc. AWS is a very compact, modular, rugged, powerful and low-cost system. The AWS system consists of a compact datalogger, data transmitter, antenna, GPS, solar panel and sensors. Power requirements are minimum and hence do not pose any operational problems. Sensors on AWS collect data at specified time interval and store the data in its memory. Logged weather data is transmitted at prescribed time slots through geostationary communication satellite systems. Datalogger, power supply and battery are housed in a weather proof enclosure. AWS data find extensive applications in agricultural monitoring – drought/crop condition assessment, crop management, disaster management – flood forecasting and in other fields like transport. Near real-time information on weather and crops allows the computation of water requirements of crops and hence invaluable for drought monitoring and management. Integration of relevant spatial and non-spatial information of natural resources and socio-economic aspects related to agricultural drought is required for the generation of spatial decision support system and AWS data are of value for drought management.

**Mobile devices** that are of interest to field data collection process are – Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) and cell phones. PDAs are basically palm-size devices that originally started as high-end organizers; but quickly added a number of features like bigger LCD screens, color, keyboard, stylus, handwriting recognition, higher speed wired and wireless data connectivity to desktop systems, etc. With time, as processor power grew, their operating systems evolved and now compact Windows operating systems are adapted to these devices. Desktop applications (word processing, spreadsheets, email clients, web browser, etc) are made available on PDAs also. Thus, this forms a handy device to record and store field level information in an organized way.

**Cellular phones** have evolved from being primarily wireless voice communication devices to encompass various features like organizer, messaging, camera, music player and Bluetooth connectivity. Over time, these mobile phones became powerful tools with many other features like larger screen, deployment of custom applications and web browser. Integrated mobile devices are also commonly equipped with a digital camera, which can be used to capture necessary field photographs for storing as well as sharing by email. Thus, it forms an important component for communicating data wirelessly to any part of the world. Public wireless networks serving the common person like the cellular networks based on GSM and CDMA technologies have become widespread and ubiquitous in recent times.

**PDA phone with GPS** is the resultant of convergence of the PDA, cellular phone and GPS technologies with a built-in camera. These PDA devices are becoming increasingly powerful with the deployment of improved processors and larger memory. They also have larger color touch screens and full QWERTY keypads for better inputting of data. With these powerful configurations, it is now possible to deploy rich GUI applications, which were considered to be difficult just a few years ago.

## Data Storage and Dissemination

Latest development in server technology enabled the availability of blade servers with RAID capabilities at a very cost effective price. These servers act as storage houses for storing the data in a safe and efficient way, and can serve clients via network sharing and World Wide Web, in near real-time. Internet is all pervasive and cost-effective technology where a number of applications are specifically designed to use the Internet and the related IP-based protocols to communicate and exchange data with one another, thereby optimizing the costs as well as ensuring widespread geographical reach. Internet connectivity on current PDA devices is easily ensured with an appropriate subscription to GPRS/ EDGE feature from the wireless network service provider. Almost all present-day organizations have an Ethernet local area network in place for data communication among the various computer systems including servers, workstations and desktop PCs. The same network is also invariably used to implement a number of intranet applications in addition to the traditional client-server based applications and databases on servers.

# Application of Spatial Technologies in Rain-fed Agriculture and Watershed Management

## Characterization of Production Systems in India

A production system (PS) is defined by the environmental resources, geography, and important issues, or constraints to, and opportunities for improving productivity and sustainable agriculture (ICRISAT, 1994). Production systems based approach to agricultural research was found to be more relevant at ICRISAT during the 1990s and the SAT was divided into 29 production systems. A GIS database of PS maps consisting of soils, climate, crops and other socioeconomic variables was used. It was proposed to refine these PSs using GIS to be able to compare with the national agro-ecological zones (AEZs) so that these PSs are useful for up-scaling and downscaling of technologies (Johansen 1998). Out of the 12 PSs in Asia, India has 10 types of PSs. Further, 12 were delineated in Latin America and 5 in Africa. Preliminary definition of these PSs required that they assist in the prioritization essential for development of ICRISAT Medium Term Plans. It also allowed for better focusing of projects to particular PSs and of the activities within projects. To identify the target regions and priority areas and allocate resources in PS research, the ability of GIS, which can analyze multiple layers of information and provide answers spatially, became evident.

Soil being the basis of life on earth and for agriculture, information on soil attributes was the most important input variable for any PS assessment. Production system-wise soil attributes were mapped and described to help researchers identify target locations for research and technology transfers. The NBSS&LUP map based on soil taxonomy was used in a GIS to provide soil information along with PS boundaries and district boundaries and area was estimated for each suborder in all the PSs. Out of the 11 soil orders of soil taxonomy, seven occur in the 10 PSs in India. The Entisols are the most pervasive of all soils and occur in all the PSs. Alfisols (suborder Ustalfs) and Vertisols (suborder Usterts) are found in eight of the 10 PSs, but Alfisols occupy a total area of 615016 $km^2$ and Vertisols 470148 $km^2$ in all the PSs with maximum area (Fig. 2). This helped in understanding the soil types and their attributes in all the PSs of India to appropriately devise technologies and provide more options to farmers of the SAT.

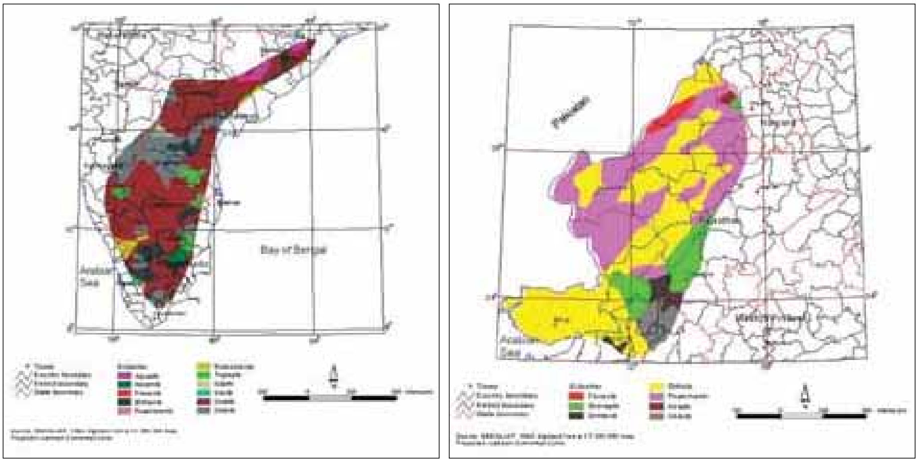

*Figure 2. Distribution of different soil orders in the production systems in India.*

## Land use Mapping for Assessing Fallows and Cropping Intensity

To delineate rainy season fallows in a state, data obtained from the Indian remote sensing satellite were analyzed. A deductive approach including delineation of agricultural land and forests from temporal satellite data was employed to identify area under (rainy season) fallow. Three sets of satellite data corresponding to three periods, namely mid-, late-, and post-rainy seasons were used. While mid-season satellite data provide information on agricultural lands, which were lying unutilized along with those agricultural lands that have been supporting crops, the satellite data of season, on the other hand, exhibited spatial distribution pattern of the land supporting crops. These lands include the areas, which were lying fallow during season, in addition to the lands that were cultivated during *season*, and are now supporting crops. In contrast, satellite data acquired during late season showed agricultural lands that were laid fallow during season and the areas where crops were planted (Fig. 3).

Madhya Pradesh is covered by two WiFS (Wide Field Sensor) images. Owing to the presence of persistent cloud cover during season, the availability of cloud-free space borne multispectral data has been the major problem. However, very short repetivity and tandem operation of the IRS-1C and IRS-1D satellites, along with the IRS-P3 satellite,

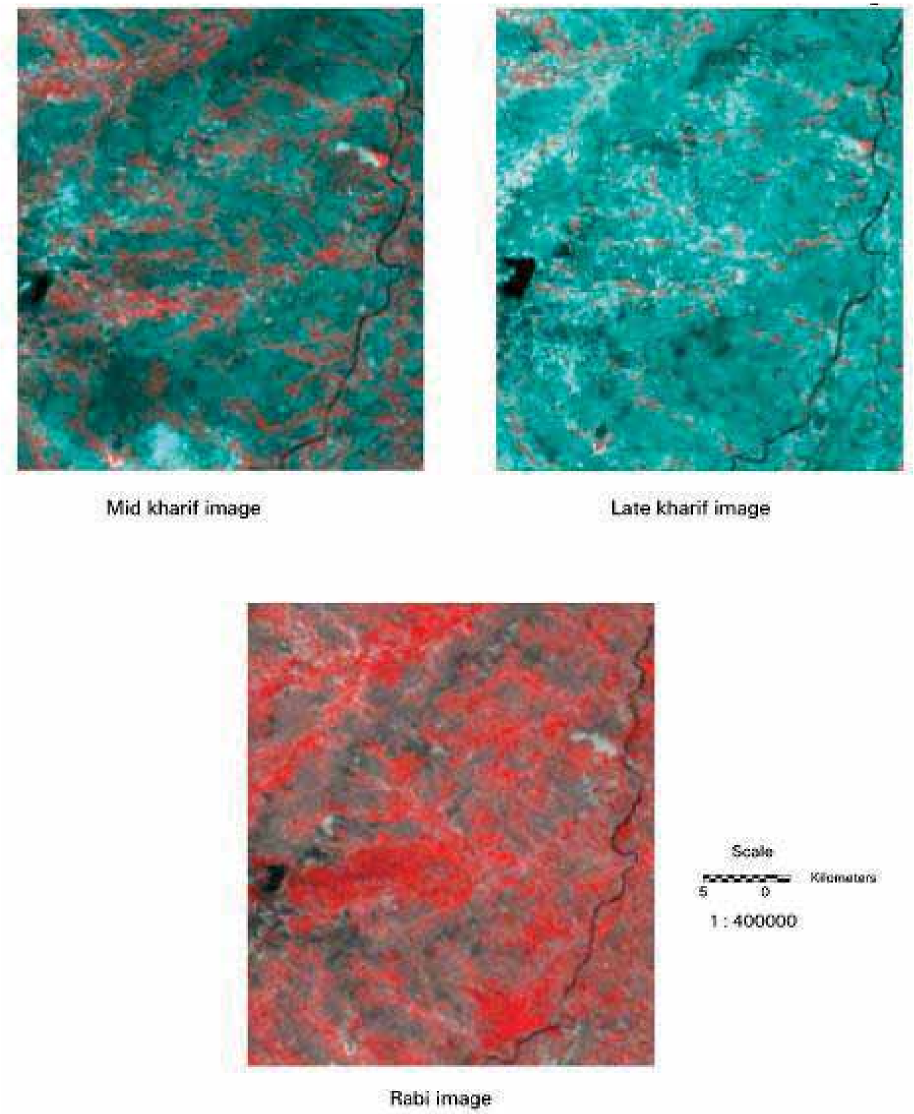


*Figure 3. A close view of WiFS images of part of Vidisha district, Madhya Pradesh, during mid-rainy, late-rainy and post-rainy seasons*

enabled acquiring virtually cloud-free WiFS data of September from IRS-1D and IRS-P3 satellites. Situation remains more or less same even during post-monsoon period. Consequently, cloud-free WiFS data were not available and out of two images covering the former state of Madhya Pradesh, one image for October was used. Satellite data acquired during peak growing period of crops, help identification of land where crops have been taken.

Digital multispectral data from WiFS aboard IRS-1D/-P3 over the area acquired during the season of 1999–2000 and *season* of 2000–01 was utilized for deriving information on fallow lands. In addition, Survey of India topographic maps at 1:250,000 scales were also used (Fig. 4). The approach essentially involved preparation of the mosaic of WiFS digital data covering entire state, preliminary digital analysis, ground-truth collection, map finalization, and generation of area statistics.

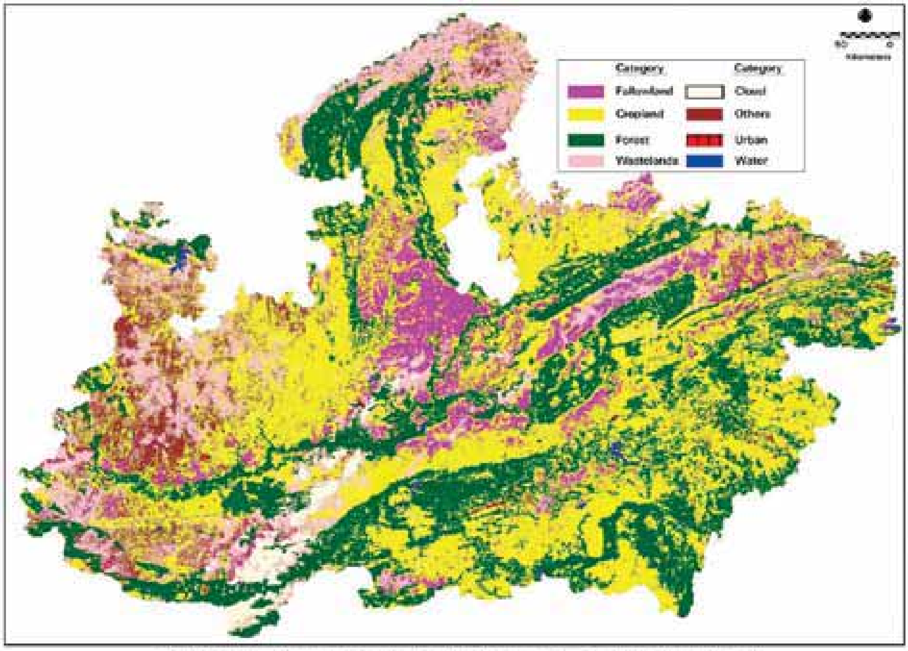


*Figure 4. Spatial distribution of various land use and land cover categories in Madhya Pradesh.*

Basically, a deductive approach was employed for delineation of fallow lands. Based on past experience, initially areas akin to fallow lands were identified after displaying the digital multispectral data onto color monitor of Silicon Graphics work station. Besides, topographic maps were used for exclusion of the areas with rock, outcrops, scrubs, hills, etc. Furthermore, other categories like forestland, cropland, wasteland, water and settlements were also broadly delineated. Doubtful areas were located in the topographic maps of 1:250,000 scale for further verification in the field.

The second generation Indian remote sensing satellites (IRS-1C and IRS-1D) have better resolution and wide applicability. The WiFS sensor provides reflectance data in red and near-infrared bands at 188 m spatial resolution and at five days revisit covering a swath of about 812 km and is useful in deriving regional level crop information. Frequent availability of the WiFS data due to shorter revisit period also facilitates monitoring of crops (Kasturirangan et al. 1996). WiFS data was found to be suitable for deriving regional information on the spatial distribution of rice (*Oryza sativa*) crop grown in the Godavari delta of East and West Godavari districts and pulse crops cultivated in the rice-fallows of the Krishna delta of Krishna and Guntur districts of Andhra Pradesh, India (Navalgund et al. 1996). In the present study, WiFS data of 1999 and 1999/2000 seasons were used to derive the regional level information on spatial distribution of rice and rice-fallow lands in the South Asian countries of Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan.

Reflectance spectra of plant canopies are a combination of the reflectance spectra of plants and of the underlying soil (Guyot 1990). When a plant canopy grows, soil contribution progressively decreases. Thus, during the active vegetative growth phase, visible and middle infrared reflectance decreases and near infrared reflectance increases. During senescence, opposite phenomenon occurs. Maximum reflectance from vegetation is sensed when crop canopy fully covers the ground, which coincides mostly with the beginning of reproductive phase. Hence, satellite data corresponding to this stage were selected to discriminate rice crop during the season.

## Spatial Distribution of Rainy Season Fallows in Madhya Pradesh

As pointed out earlier, a deductive approach including delineation of agricultural land and forests from temporal satellite data was employed to identify fallow in Madhya Pradesh. Three sets of satellite data corresponding to three periods, namely mid-season, late-*kharif* (rainy season) and *rabi* (post-rainy season) were used. While mid-season satellite data provides the information on agricultural lands, which were lying unutilized along with those agricultural lands that have been supporting crops, the satellite data of *rabi*, on the other hand, exhibits the spatial distribution pattern of the land supporting crops. These lands include the areas, which were lying fallow during the season, and are now supporting crops. Contrastingly, the satellite data acquired during late season show the agricultural lands that were lying fallow during the season and the areas where crops were planted.

It was estimated that 2.02 million ha accounting for 6.57% of the total area of the state were under fallow (Fig. 5). Madhya Pradesh is endowed with well distributed rains ranging from 700 to 1200 mm. Vertisols with good moisture holding capacity can be used to grow short-duration soybean by adopting sound land management practices (Dwivedi et al. 2003). ICRISAT-led consortium through funding from Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (SDTT) and Sir Ratan Tata Trust (SRTT) in selected districts in Madhya Pradesh, India have initiated concerted farmers participatory

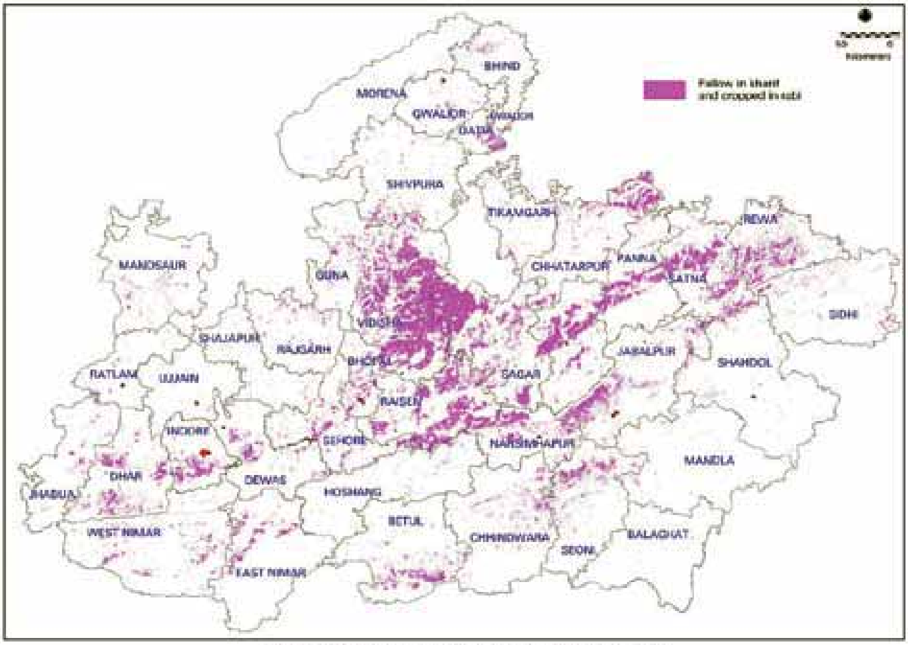


*Figure 5. Spatial distribution of rainy season fallows in districts of Madhya Pradesh.*

research and development (PR&D) trials using broad-bed and furrows (BBF) to alleviate waterlogging short duration soybean and maize cultivars during rainy season, minimum tillage for *rabi*, chickpea to minimize rainy season fallows (Wani et al. 2010).

## Spatial Distribution and Quantification of Rice-fallows in South Asia – Potential for Legumes

Rice, the most extensively grown crop in South Asia, is cultivated on approximately 50 million ha. Despite growing demands for food production because of an increasing population in South Asia, there is little scope for expansion of cropping into new areas and therefore an increase in cropping intensity, along with improvement of yields, needs to take place on existing agricultural lands. Rice-fallows present considerable scope for crop intensification and diversification with the use of appropriate technology. But there has been limited information on the area of rice-fallows available and on the potential technologies that could be implemented.

This study describes the use of satellite remote sensing and GIS technology to develop an accurate and updated quantification and spatial distribution of rice-fallow lands and a corresponding classification of their potential and constraints for post-rice legumes cultivation in South Asia (Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan). These rice-fallows represent diverse soil types and climatic conditions and most of these areas appear suitable for growing either cool season or warm season legumes.

Introducing appropriate legumes into rice-fallows is likely to have significant impact on the national economies through increased food security, improved quality of nutrition to humans and animals, poverty alleviation, employment generation, and contribution to the sustainability of these cereal-based PSs in South Asia. This would also provide guidance to policy makers and funding agencies to identify critical research areas and to remove various bottlenecks associated with effective and sustainable utilization of rice-fallows in South Asia.

Satellite image analysis estimated that rice area during 1999 season was about 50.4 million ha. Rice-fallows during 1999/2000 season were

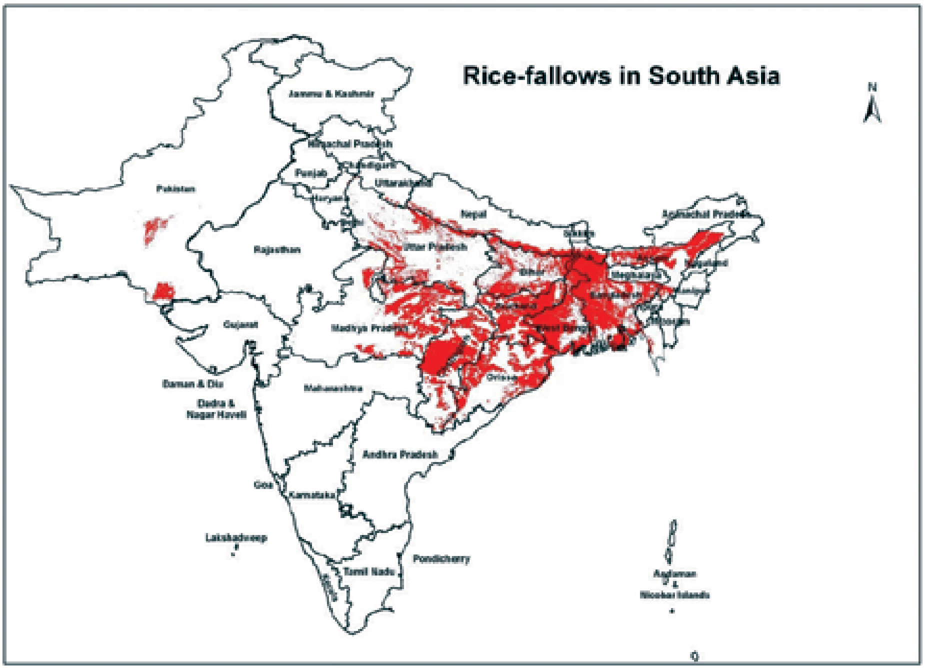


*Figure 6. Spatial distribution of rice-fallows in Indo Gangetic Plains of South Asia.*

estimated at 14.29 million ha in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan. This amounts to nearly 30% of the rice-growing area (Fig. 6). These rice-fallows offer a huge potential niche for legumes production in this region. Nearly 82% of the rice-fallows are located in the Indian states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Orissa and Assam.

The GIS analysis of these fallow lands has indicated that they represent diverse soil types and climatic conditions; thus a variety of both warm season legumes [such as soybean, mung bean (*Vigna radiata;* green gram), black gram (*Vigna mungo*), pigeonpea and groundnut)] and cool season legumes [such as chickpea, lentil (*Lens culinaris*), *khesari* (*Lathyrus sativus*; grass pea), faba bean (*Vicia faba*) and pea (*Pisum sativum*)] can be grown in this region (Subbarao et al. 2001).

An economic analysis has shown that growing legumes in rice-fallows is profitable for the farmers with a benefit-cost ratio exceeding 3.0 for many legumes. Also, utilizing rice-fallows for legume production could result in the generation of 584 million person-days employment for South Asia. Technological components of rain-fed cropping, especially for chickpea crop, have been identified. These include the use of short-duration chickpea varieties, block planting so as to protect the crop from grazing animals, sowing using rapid minimum tillage as soon as possible after harvesting rice, seed priming for 4–6 hours with the addition of sodium molybdate to the priming water at 0.5 g $L^{-1}$ $kg^{-1}$ seed and *Rhizobium* inoculum at 5 g $L^{-1}$ $kg^{-1}$ seed, and application of manure and single superphosphate. Yield of chickpea following rice ranged from 0.4 t $ha^{-1}$ to 3.0 t $ha^{-1}$ across various rice-fallow areas in eastern India. More than six thousand farmers, who have been exposed to this technology, are now convinced that a second crop can be grown without irrigation in rice-fallows. Similar results have been obtained for the Barind region in Bangladesh. Seed priming has been shown to substantially improve the plant stand for chickpea in rice-fallows in the Barind regions of Bangladesh (Harris et al 1999). Rain-fed cropping in rice-fallow areas increased incomes and improved food security and human nutrition (Subbarao et al. 2001). In a number of villages in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh in India, the on-farm farmers' participatory action research trials sponsored by the Ministry of Water Resources, Government of India, showed significantly enhanced rainwater use efficiency through cultivation of rice fallows.

## GIS Mapping of Spatial Variability of Soil Micronutrients at District Level

Spatial variability of secondary nutrient sulphur and micronutrients boron and zinc in selected rain-fed districts of Karnataka in South India was studied using GIS. Stratified random sampling methodology described by Sahrawat et al. 2008 was used for collecting soil samples from each watershed. About 30,000 soil samples were collected and analyzed for soil nutrients including boron, sulphur and zinc content. Village level geographical coordinates were obtained using a GPS. The IDW method in the ArcGIS 9.0 software for interpolation was standardized in this study.

Nutrient availability maps for 15 districts were generated for all nutrients including boron, sulphur and zinc (Fig. 7). All maps of predicted surfaces

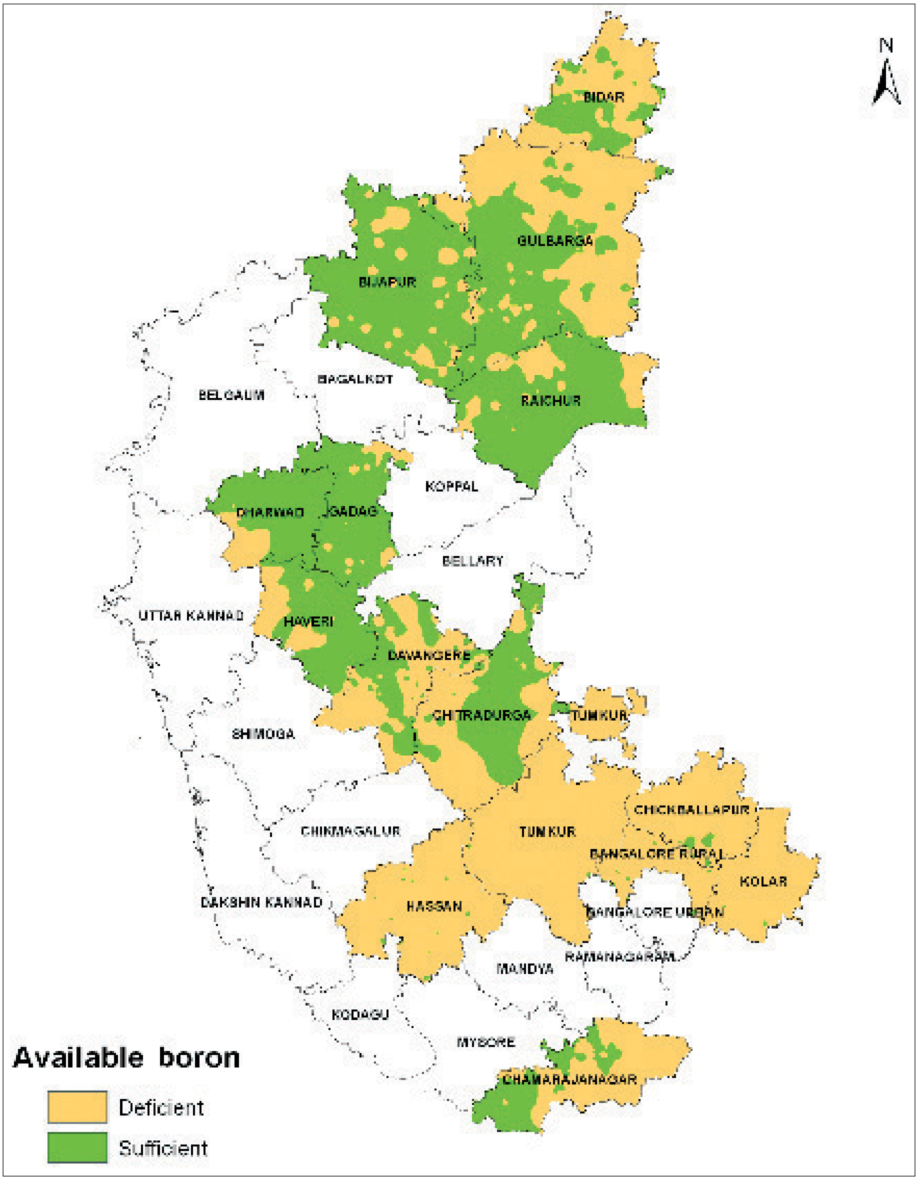


*Figure 7. Availability of phosphorus in selected districts of Karnataka.*

are classified into two classes viz., deficient and sufficient. Boundary limits of nutrient availability for the critically low, low and normal classes were obtained from standard results (Sahrawat et al. 2007).

Through the standardized GIS-based interpolation method, agricultural extension personnel and farmers in watersheds can be provided with reliable and cost efficient soil analysis results of selected districts for developing balanced nutrient management strategies at *taluk* levels. However, due to limitations in the IDW method, the generated maps are to be used only at district or *taluk* level and not for predicting the nutrient availability at single field level.

## Assessment of Seasonal Rainfall Forecasting and Climate Risk Management Options for Peninsular India

Uncertainty of the climate and weather has adverse effects on crop production and income of the farmers in the SAT. They are traditionally risk averse and conservative in adopting high input improved technologies because of the uncertainties in production associated with variable climate. Seasonal climate prediction before onset of the season could help them in taking appropriate decisions to minimize losses in low rainfall years and harness the potential in the normal or high rainfall years. With the technical input from the International Research Institute on Climate Prediction, a pilot project was carried out in Nandyal and Anantapur in Andhra Pradesh to assess the value and benefit of seasonal climate prediction at district scale to the farmers (Rao et al., 2007). Using GCM predictor-based model output statistical (MOS) technique, the probabilistic seasonal rainfall prediction for the year 2003 was communicated to the farmers at a lead time of more than a month to take up appropriate cropping decisions for the two districts. Seasonal climate prediction for Nandyal proved accurate and the farmers derived significant benefit by adopting double cropping in the region as compared to the single crop. Farmers in Anantapur had mixed experience as the rains started late in the district. The farmers who adopted groundnut/short-duration pigeonpea intercrop were benefited and those who followed groundnut/medium-duration pigeonpea intercrop incurred losses as compared to the sole groundnut system.

## Baseline Studies to Delineate Watershed

Accurate delineation of a watershed plays an extremely important role in the management of the watershed. The delineated boundaries form the nucleus around which the management efforts such as land use, land cover change, soil types, geology and river flows are analyzed and appropriate conclusions drawn. Digital elevation models (DEM) provide good terrain representation from which watershed boundary can be delineated automatically using GIS technology. There are various data sources for generation of DEM. Usually, the height contours mentioned in topographical maps are digitized and are used for generation of DEM. Besides, photogrammetric techniques using stereo data from aerial or satellite platforms can also be used for DEM generation. In this context, data acquired across the path from satellites like IRS-1D and SPOT has shown temporal variation in terrain radiometry, leading to poor DEM accuracies. To improve cross image correlation between stereo pair imagery, Cartosat-1 launched with 2 cameras beaming along the path with which DEM of 3-4 m height accuracy (Srivastava et al. 2007) was achieved. Further, processing techniques like stereo strip triangulation has greatly improved throughput of DEM generation with limited ground control points and short time. Besides, the latest developments in interferometry and laser altimetry enable faster and precise generation of DEMs. Recent developments in laser altimetry and its data processing enable generation of DEM with centimetres accuracy under ideal condition.

The techniques for automated watershed delineation have been available since mid-eighties and have been implemented in various GIS systems and custom applications (Garbrecht and Martz 1999). Figure 8 portrays the Cartosat-1 data and the DEM derived there from along with LISS-IV multispectral data.


*Figure 8. Satellite Data and DEM of watershed in part of Nalgonda district, Andhra Pradesh.*

**Watershed characterization** involves inventorying and assessment of natural resources, which is essential pre-requisites of any watershed management activity. For example, watershed managers need timely and reliable information on soils, crops, groundwater potential and land use. Similarly, an assessment of the properties of the soils and their response to management is required in agricultural and forestry, for decision making in planning and for many other engineering works. It has been demonstrated beyond doubt that remotely sensed data can be effectively used to prepare maps on various themes such as land use/land cover, soil distribution, geomorphology, etc., which in turn form the basic tools for designing a proper management strategy. High resolution remotely sensed data when used in conjunction with conventional data, can provide valuable inputs such as watershed area, size and shape, topography, drainage pattern and landforms for watershed characterization and analysis (Obi Reddy et al. 2001).

**Prioritisation of watersheds** helps in focusing the implementation activities on a few watersheds that urgently need attention. Watershed prioritization is simply ranking of different sub-watersheds of a watershed according to the order in which they have to be taken up for treatment and soil and water conservation measures or to improve crop productivity. This also helps to avoid spreading too thin, the limited financial resources available for implementation over the entire area. Remote sensing derived inputs were considered for prioritising the watershed when it is based on natural resources limitations or potentials in a watershed (Sharma 1997, Khare et al. 2001, Sekhar and Rao 2002, NRSA 2006, Rao et al. 1998 and Saxena et al. 2000).

The prioritization of watersheds in India is on the basis of natural resources status, socio-economic, biophysical and other criteria. During initial stages, soil erosion control was the prime concern for watershed prioritization. Various methods were developed in this regard for watershed prioritization like sediment yield modelling (Sharma 1997) or erosion-proneness of land units (Sekhar and Rao 2002). Subsequently, land productivity was also considered through identification of critical areas (NRSA 2006). In latest guidelines for prioritization of watersheds the combination of natural resources, problem areas and socio-economic conditions (agricultural labourers/SC, ST population/distribution of BPL families) were considered for prioritization.

Geospatial data and multi criteria based prioritization of watersheds helps in making unbiased choice of target areas for development. The multi-layer geospatial analysis results in the generation of composite mapping units which could further be processed through multi criteria analysis to arrive at the end result. GIS and IT tools at watershed level has been successfully used to establish a strong baseline information system and prioritization (Khan et al. 2001, Thakkar and Dhiman 2007, and Diwakar and Jayaraman 2007).

Success of conservation measures whether it is vegetative or structural, depends upon the selection of suitable sites. Various factors such as physiography, soil characteristics and topographic features of the terrain have to be considered to arrive at a decision regarding sites for conservation measures. Computer based database management systems for terrain and elevation modeling and Geographic Information Systems have really enhanced potential of remotely sensed data in identifying suitable locations for conservation measures.

## Regional-Scale Water Budgeting for SAT India

A soil water balance model (WATBAL) (Keig and McAlpine 1974) was used to estimate the available soil water spatially (2.5 arc minutes 4.5 km approximately) and temporally (monthly) using the above pedo-climatic datasets to run WATBAL. Input data for the WATBAL model are the precipitation and potential evapotranspiration (PET) as gridded interpolated surfaces from point data. The interpolated climatic surfaces are available at monthly temporal resolution. Maximum soil water-holding capacity (SWHC) is extracted from the Digital Soil Map of the World and its derived soil properties (FAO 1996).

For prioritization and selection of target regions for watershed development, first-order water budgeting using GIS-linked water balance model was used for the selected states in central and peninsular India. Such a simulation model used with monthly rainfall and soils data generated outputs that can be effectively used to prioritize the regions and strategies for improved management of rainwater. Once the target region is selected, then the selection of appropriate benchmark sites using second-order water budgeting with more detailed simulation models can be applied. GIS map produced by using this methodology shows the potential of various regions in Central and Peninsular India for the amount of water surplus available for water harvesting and groundwater recharging.

## Spatial Water Balance Modeling of Watersheds

ICRISAT consortium with national partners started watershed development activities from year 2000 onwards in one of the micro-watershed, Kothapally, located at Musi catchment in Southern India. Since the on-set of the program, water flows and crop parameters have been monitored, creating a good database of hydrological data and crop yield information. GIS based hydrological model, Soil and Water Assessment Tool (SWAT) is applied to study the water balance for different water management options. Impact of watershed management practices on water availability, and sediment loss was assessed. Four scenarios were developed with combination of (a) with or without in-situ land management practices and (b) with or without building storage structures in stream channel (called as ex-situ management). Thus scenarios are: 1) in-situ + ex-situ; 2) in-situ + no ex-situ; 3) no in-situ + ex-situ; 4) no in-situ + no ex-situ.

## Water Balance of Different Water Intervention Scenarios

Results shows different water interventions significantly change the water balance components in watershed (Fig. 9). Before the introduction of the watershed development program (scenario four), approximately 60% of the rainfall became evaportranspiration (ET), while some 10% recharged the groundwater aquifer and 20% was lost from the watershed boundary as outflows, during the first cropping season. When the watershed development program was in place, the amount of water leaving the watershed as ET had increased to around 70%, groundwater recharge was also higher than previously, while outflows from the watershed was now less than 10% of the total water balance (scenario 1). Constructing check-dams substantially increased groundwater recharge (scenario 3), while in-situ practices resulted in a higher ET, since more water was available as soil moisture in the fields, and higher groundwater recharge (scenario 2).

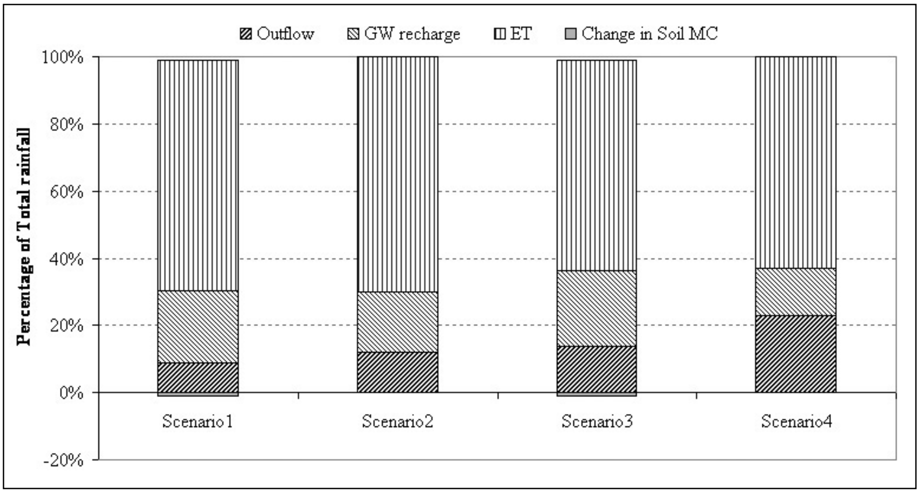


*Figure 9. Water balance for the four different water management scenarios for the first cropping season (from June to Dec); scenario 1: in-situ + check-dams; scenario 2: in-situ + no check-dams; scenario-3: no in-situ + check-dams; scenario-4: no in-situ + no check-dams. (GWrecharge = groundwater recharge. ET = evapotranspiration).*

## Sediment Transport and Soil loss

Soil loss is strongly affected by rainfall intensity (Fig. 10). Rainfall intensities below 20-30 mm day$^{-1}$ did not generate much soil loss in any of the four management scenarios. However, a clear difference in soil loss can be seen between the situation before and after the implementation of the watershed development program at rainfall intensities above 50 mm/day, where more soil is lost from the system without water interventions.

Without watershed development, it is seen that soil loss from the fields as rainfall intensities above 100 mm day$^{-1}$ significantly impacts downstream systems. High rainfall intensities are expected to become more common with a changing climate, and soil loss from the fields can therefore be expected to increase in the future.

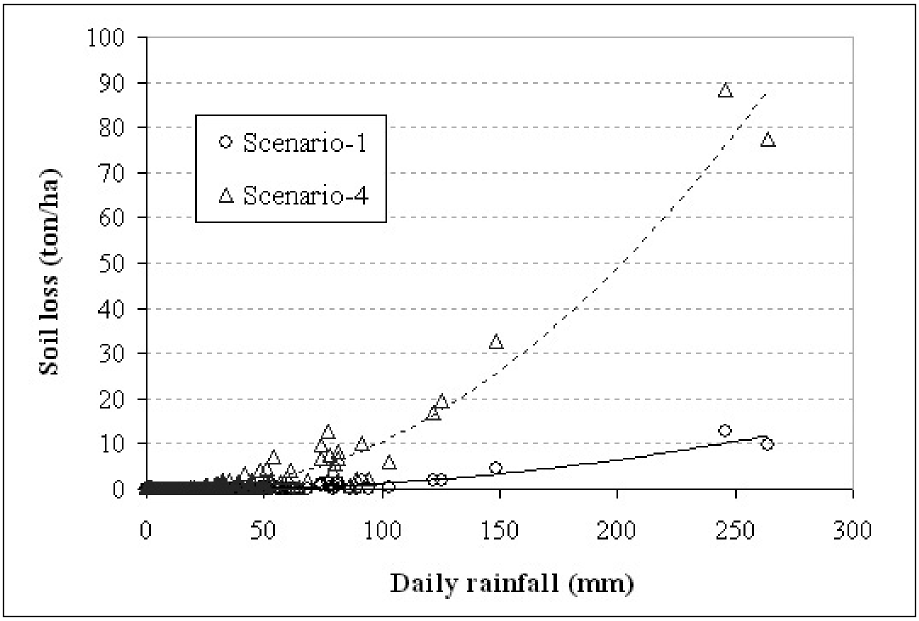


*Figure 10. Rainfall vs. soil loss; scenario 1: in-situ + check-dams (post watershed development); scenario 4: no in-situ + no check-dams (no watershed development).*

# Integrated Watershed Management for Land and Water Conservation and Sustainable Agricultural Production in Asia

## Assessment of Agroclimatic Potential

Maximizing agricultural production from rain-fed areas in a sustainable manner is the need of the day to feed the ever-increasing population. Knowledge on agroclimatology is a valuable tool in assessing the suitability of a watershed for rainwater harvesting and crop planning. Role of climate assumes greater importance in the semi-arid regions where moisture regime during the cropping season is strongly dependent on the quantum and distribution of rainfall *vis-à-vis* the soil water holding capacity and water release characteristics. In spite of cultivation of high yielding varieties, improved cultural practices and plant protection measures, favourable weather is a must for good harvests (Rao et al.

1999). A thorough understanding of the climatic conditions helps in devising suitable management practices for taking advantage of the favourable weather conditions and avoiding or minimizing risks due to adverse weather conditions. Agroclimatic analysis and characterization of watersheds need to be carried out using databases having long-period weather data and agroclimatic datasets need to be developed at individual watershed level. Agroclimatic analyses of the watersheds is based on the concepts of rainfall probability, dry and wet spells, water balance, length of growing period (LGP), droughts, crop-weather modelling, climate variability and change. Enhancing climate awareness among the rural stakeholders using new IT tools is the need of the hour.

## Climatic Water Balance

Availability of water in right quantity and at the right time and its management with suitable agronomic practices are essential for good crop growth and yield. To assess water availability to crops, soil moisture is to be taken into account and the net water available through soil moisture can be estimated using water balance technique. Simple single-layer water balance model of Thornthwaite and Mather (1955) outputs various water balance elements like actual evapotranspiration (AET), water surplus (WS) and water deficit (WD) based on rainfall, potential evapotranspiration (PET) and soil water holding and release properties. PET (amount of water that is lost in to the atmosphere through evaporation and transpiration from a short green crop, completely shading the ground, of uniform height and with adequate water status in the soil profile) can be estimated using the modified FAO-Penman-Monteith method (Allen et al. 1998). Water balance though simple, is a powerful tool to quantify water deficit, water surplus and runoff potential, to delineate the rain-fed LGP, dry and wet spells during the crop growth period, and for monitoring of moisture stress leading to drought at watersheds.

**Climatic water balance of watersheds in China, Thailand, Vietnam and India:** Weekly water balances of selected watersheds in China, Thailand and Vietnam were completed based on long-term agrometeorological data and soil type. The water balance components included PET, AET, WS and WD. PET varied from about 890 mm at

**Table 2. Annual water balance characters (all values in mm)**

| Country | Location | Rainfall | PET | AET | WS | WD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| China | Xiaoxingcun | 641 | 1464 | 641 | Nil | 815 |
| | Lucheba | 1284 | 891 | 831 | 384 | 60 |
| Thailand | Wang Chai | 1171 | 1315 | 1031 | 138 | 284 |
| | Tad Fa | 1220 | 1511 | 1081 | 147 | 430 |
| Vietnam | Chine | 2028 | 1246 | 1124 | 907 | 122 |
| | Vinh Phuc | 1585 | 1138 | 1076 | 508 | 62 |
| India | Bundi | 755 | 1641 | 570 | 186 | 1071 |
| | Guna | 1091 | 1643 | 681 | 396 | 962 |
| | Junagadh | 868 | 1764 | 524 | 354 | 1240 |
| | Nemmikal | 816 | 1740 | 735 | 89 | 1001 |
| | Tirunelveli | 568 | 1890 | 542 | Nil | 1347 |

Lucheba in China to 1890 mm at Tirunelveli in South India (Table 2). AET values are relatively lower in the watersheds in China and India compared to those in Thailand and Vietnam. Varying levels of water surplus and water deficit occur in the watersheds. Among all the locations, Tirunelveli in India has the largest water deficit (1347 mm) level and no water surplus. Chine in Vietnam has the largest water surplus level of 907 mm. These analyses defined the dependability for moisture availability for crop production and opportunities for water harvesting and groundwater recharge.

## Rain-fed LGP

Knowledge on the date of onset of rains will help plan better the agricultural operations, particularly, land preparation and sowing. Length of rainy season is the duration between onset and end of agriculturally significant rains. Rain-fed LGP is defined as length of the rainy season, plus the period for which the soil moisture storage at the end of rainy season and the post-rainy season and winter rainfall can meet the crop water needs. Therefore, the LGP depends not only on the rainfall distribution but also on the type of soil, soil depth, water retention and release characteristics of the soil. This assumes greater importance from a watershed perspective where soil depth in a toposequence can also alter the LGP across the watershed. It is the highest in the low-lying regions and the lowest in the upper reaches of the watersheds. Agroclimatic characterization of selected watersheds in Nalgonda, Mahabubnagar and Kurnool districts of Andhra Pradesh based on water balance and rain-fed LGP (Kesava Rao et al. 2007) indicated that the beginning and ending of the crop-growing season varied across the years at the watersheds. In all the watersheds, the end has more variable compared to the beginning. However, there was no definite relationship between the beginning and length of growing season. Nemmikal (medium-deep Vertisol) and Nandavaram (deep Vertisol) watersheds provide greater opportunity for double cropping. Appayapally, Thirumalapuram and parts of Nemmikal watersheds having medium-deep Alfisols, provide opportunity for double cropping with relatively short duration crops, but are more suitable for intercropping with medium-duration crops like pigeonpea and castor. Kacharam, Mentapally, Sripuram, Malleboinpally and Karivemula have medium-deep Alfisols and provide greater potential for sole cropping during rainy season with crops of 120 to 130 days duration and intercropping with short to medium-duration crops to make better use of soil water availability.

Early season drought occurs at Karivemula and Thirumalapuram and early and mid-season droughts occur at Nandavaram. These sites would require crop/varieties tolerant to early or mid-season droughts depending upon the location. Mentapally, Malleboinpally, Nemmikal and Appayapally have greater potential for water harvesting.

## Drought Monitoring at Watersheds

Based on the weather data generated by the AWS and using the simple water balance model, weekly moisture stress conditions were monitored at selected benchmark watersheds during the year 2004 in AP (Fig. 11). The analysis indicated that among the 10 watersheds, longest crop growing period of about 21 weeks was observed at Nemmikal while, Karivemula and Devanakonda had only 16 weeks. Kacharam, Nemmikal, Thirumalapuram and Appayapally experienced good moisture conditions. Sripuram, Nandavaram and Devanakonda experienced severe drought conditions before flowering period.

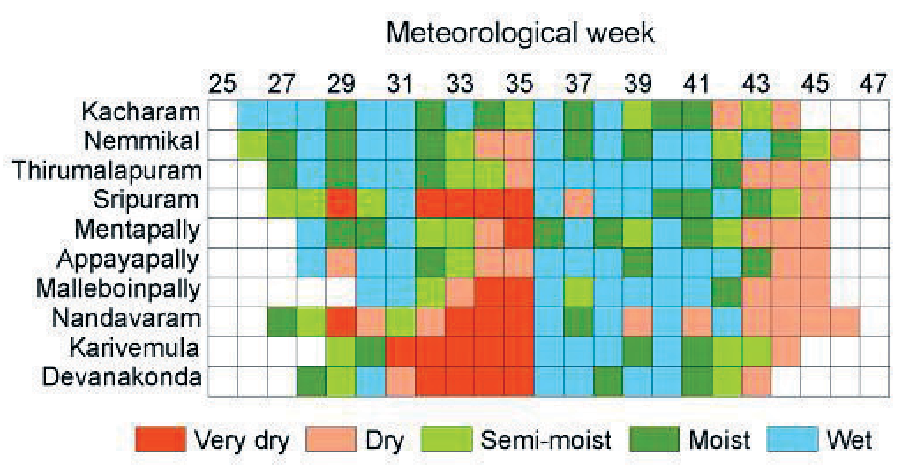


*Figure 11. Drought monitoring at benchmark watersheds in Andhra Pradesh during 2004.*

Karivemula experienced a disastrous drought of five-week duration. At most locations, growing period ended by 1st week of November, two-weeks early compared to the normal. Near real-time monitoring of moisture conditions at watershed level offers great scope in drought management for stabilizing crop yields.

## Weather Forecasting for Agriculture

Day-to-day agricultural operations are weather sensitive; hence farmers show keen interest to know the weather in advance. Weather forecasts provide guidelines for seasonal planning and selection of crops and day-to-day management practices. Weather forecasts for agricultural operations are required terms of rainfall and its intensity, air temperature, wind speed and direction, humidity and sunshine/radiation. All three types of weather forecasts viz., short, medium and long range are being issued by the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

One of the major functions of weather forecasts is to provide need-based information to enable the farmers to decide on taking a positive action, evasive action or no action at all. Weather based advisories can help farmers in minimizing the loss of inputs mainly seed, diesel, fertilizer, pesticide, labor and time. Recommendations of land preparation for nursery and sowing will be of great help to farmers. IMD in collaboration with several organizations is implementing Agromet Advisory Services on an experimental basis at about 125 locations in India. Improvements in the accuracy of forecasts and providing appropriate advisory will result in increased economic returns. A state-of-the-art Integrated Forecasting and Communication System is implemented during September 2010 at the IMD, New Delhi that is expected to provide more accurate weather data. Weather alerts by E-mail are being planned.

## Watershed Monitoring

Repetitive nature of satellite data enables change monitoring and assists in understanding the effect of management activity undertaken. Projects like Integrated Mission for Sustainable Development (IMSD), National Agricultural Technology Project" (NATP), and Sujala watershed project demonstrated the operationalization of remote sensing in the sphere of watershed management, ranging from resource appraisal to implementation and monitoring (NRSA, 1995; NRSA, 2002, Rao et al., 2010, Kaushalya et al., 2010). Cyclic re-visit of space-borne sensors enables to repetitively cover the same watershed at regular time intervals to detect, monitor and evaluate the changes occurring in the treated watersheds. Satellite images of watersheds acquired during pre and post treatment periods offer a rich source of information about the process of the implementation of the program and its impact. Changes like increase in crop land, cropping intensity, clearing of natural vegetation, change in surface water spread/levels, afforestation, etc., could be monitored using multi-date satellite images.

## Satellite Images for Impact Assessment

The remotely sensed data has the advantages of providing synoptic view and large area coverage which helps in obtaining the proverbial "birds eye view" of the ground features. Satellites, which orbit around the earth, provide a vantage point to find, measure, map and monitor the earth's natural resources. Remotely sensed data potentially offer a rich source of information about conditions on the earth surface that change over time. Measuring and evaluating changes in a landscape over time is an important application of remote sensing. With the launch of Indian Remote Sensing Satellites (IRS), data availability both in the multispectral and panchromatic domains with varieties of spatial resolution are assured for user community. The repetitive coverage of the same area over a period of time provides a good opportunity to monitor the land resources and evaluate land cover changes through a comparison of multi-temporal images acquired for the same area at different points of time.

Changes like increased area under cultivation, conversion of annual crop land to horticulture, change in surface water body, afforestation, soil reclamation, etc., could be monitored through satellite remote sensing. Due to large area coverage at different point of time, the technology facilitates for evaluating the ground realities at any given point of time.

The satellite images from different space platforms have varieties of sensors in the visible and infrared region and are good for assessing the dynamics of watershed development, type of vegetation, crop vigor, growth monitoring, green biomass, soil and water characteristics of a watershed. However, these sensors have a constraint of not being able to sense the earth's surface during cloud cover conditions. This is particularly a constraint while imaging in the optical region of the electromagnetic spectrum during the *kharif* season.

## Monitoring and Evaluation of Watersheds using Remote Sensing

During first phase of the project, 60 watersheds were identified for impact evaluation from Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh and similarly 62 NWDPRA watersheds were treated during IX$^{th}$ Five Year Plan period in the second phase from Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttaranchal, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Evaluation of identified watersheds was carried out using remote sensing technique by considering the parameters like cropped area: change in area extent of agricultural crops, cropping pattern, extent of wetland and irrigated crops; plantations: increase in agricultural and forest plantations; wastelands: change in areal extent; alternate land use: switching over from marginal cropland to agro-horticulture and agro-forestry; water body: change in number and areal spread and biomass: overall changes in biomass or canopy cover or productivity.

Satellite remote sensing data of identified watersheds pertaining to pre- and post-treatment periods were analyzed. The analysis involved geometric corrections, digitization and extraction of the study area from the satellite imagery, preparation of land use / land cover maps of two periods data, preparation of normalized difference vegetation index (NDVI) images for both data sets, quantification of improvements in the arable and non-arable lands using time-series analysis of both data sets. Digital analysis of satellite data was carried out at the Regional Remote Sensing Service Centre (RRSSCs), Indian Satellite Research Organization. The analysis involved geometric correction of image data with respect to reference map to start with, digitization of watershed boundary, land use/land cover mapping, NDVI generation and image comparisons (Fig. 12). Geometric correction of IRS LISS III sensor data covering the study area was done through acquisition of ground control points (GCPs) from 1:50,000 reference map with respect to corresponding satellite images, followed by computation of polynomial transformation model with two-way relationship, followed by output image generation through resampling techniques to obtain rectified final image. Image-to-image registration of two-date satellite data was done

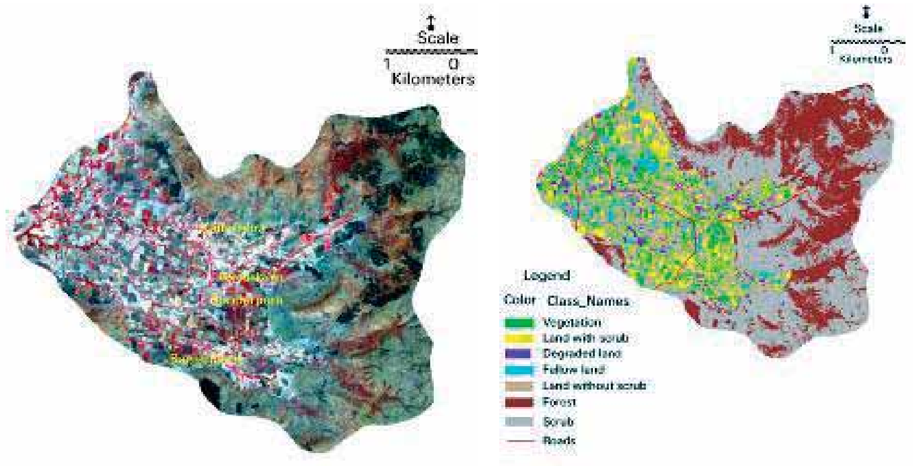


*Figure 12. Guna watershed, Madhya Pradesh.*

by identifying accurate common GCPs on both images for computing yet another transformation model followed by re-sampling, resulting in co-registered images for comparative analysis.

Change detection is a process of determining and evaluating difference in a variety of surface phenomena over time while using geospatial data sets of multiple dates. Changes can be determined by comparing spectral responses at the same spatial location amongst a set of two or more multi-spectral data acquired at different points of time. There are many change detection algorithms using digital techniques like image differencing, image rationing, principal component analysis and comparison of classified images.

## Monitoring and Impact Assessment of Adarsha Watershed

Adarsha watershed in Kothapally is bound by geo-coordinates 17°21' to 17°24' N and 78°5' to 78°8' E and forms part of Shankarpally mandal (an administrative unit) of Ranga Reddy district, Andhra Pradesh (AP), India. Vertisols and associated Vertic soils occupy 90% of the watershed area. However, Alfisols do occur to an extent of 10% of the watershed area. The main (rainy season) crops grown are sorghum, maize, cotton (*Gossypium* sp), sunflower, mung bean (green gram) and pigeonpea. During (postrainy season) wheat, rice, sorghum, sunflower, vegetables and chickpea are grown (Fig. 13). The mean annual rainfall is about 800 mm, which is received mainly during June to October.

There are number of watershed case studies using satellite data are available in addition to the centrally sponsored initiatives (Wani et al. 2003, Sreedevi et al. 2009, Kaushalya et al. 2009, 2010, Roy et al. 2010). For Adarsha watershed, Kothapally in Andhra Pradesh, Thematic maps were prepared by enhancing the low resolution multispectral data with high resolution panchromatic data by a process of merging to obtain information on hydrogeomorphological conditions, soil resources, and present land use/land cover have been generated through a systematic visual interpretation of IRS-1B/-1C/-1D LISS-II and -III data in conjunction with the collateral information in the form of published maps, reports, wisdom of the local people, etc supported

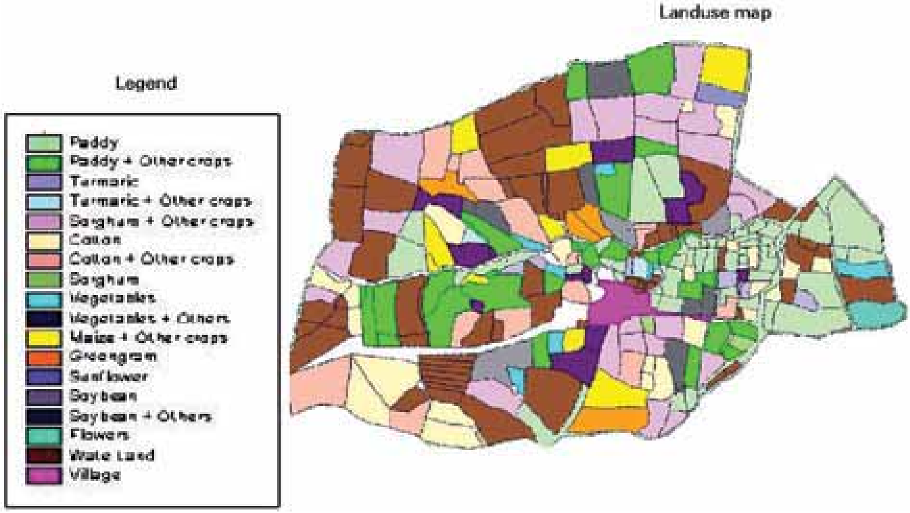


*Figure 13. Landuse and cropping pattern of Adarsha watershed, Kothapally, Andhra Pradesh.*

by ground- truth. The information derived on the lithology of the area and geomorphic and structural features in conjunction with recharge condition and precipitation was used to infer groundwater potential of each lithological unit.

In addition, derivative maps, namely, land capability and land irrigability maps were generated based on information on soils and terrain conditions according to criteria from the All India Soil and Land Use Survey Organization (All India Soil and Land Use Survey 1970). Land use/land cover maps have been prepared using monsoon and winter crop growing seasons and summer period satellite data for delineating single-cropped and double-cropped areas apart from other land use and land cover categories. Furthermore, micro-watersheds and water bodies have been delineated and the drainage networks have also been mapped (Fig. 14). Slope maps showing various slope categories have been prepared based on contour information available at 1:50,000 scale topographical sheets. Rainfall data were analyzed to study the rainfall distribution pattern in time and space. Demographic and socioeconomic data were analyzed to generate information on population density, literacy status, economic backwardness and the availability of basic amenities.

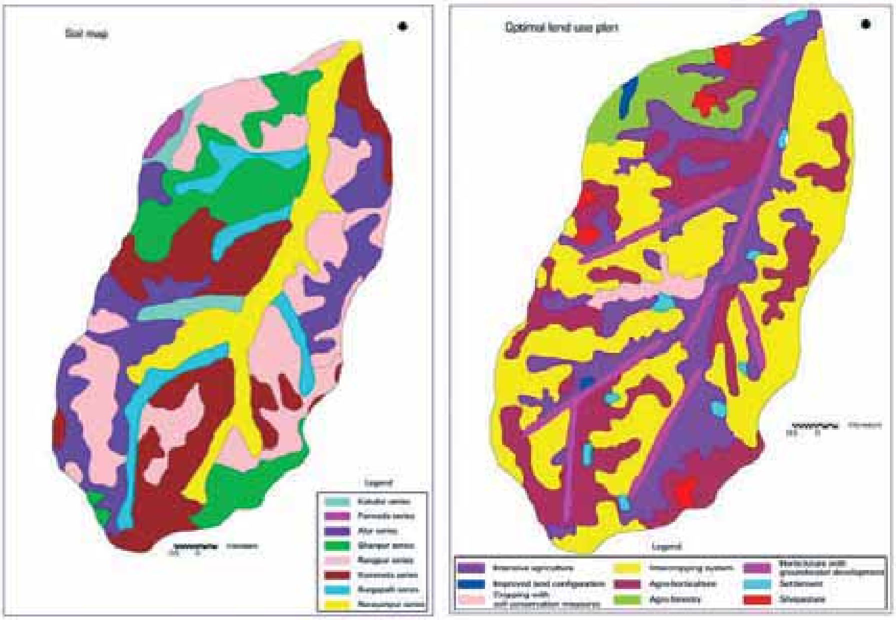

*Figure 14. Thematic maps depicting soils and land use plan in Adarsha watershed, Kothapally, Andhra Pradesh.*

Since the Adarsha watershed often experiences drought, apart from alternate land use based on potential and limitations of natural resources, various drought proofing measures such as vegetative barriers, contour bunding, stone check-dams, irrigation water management, horticulture, groundwater development with conservation measures, and silvipasture in marginal lands have been undertaken (Fig. 11). The suggested optimal land use practices are intensive agriculture, intercropping system, improved land configuration, agro-horticulture, horticulture with groundwater development and silvipasture. Soon after implementation of the suggested action plan, the watershed underwent transformation, which was monitored regularly. Such an exercise not only helps in studying the impact of the program, but also enables resorting to mid-course corrections, if required. Parameters included under monitoring activities are land use/land cover, extent of irrigated area, vegetation density and condition, fluctuation of groundwater level, well density and yield, cropping pattern and crop yield, occurrence of hazards and socioeconomic conditions. Land use/land cover parameters include:

changes in the number and aerial extent of surface water bodies, spatial extent of forest and other plantations, wastelands and cropped area.

NDVI has been used to monitor the impact of implementation of action plan. NDVI images of 1996 and 2000 reveal an increase in the vegetation cover, which is reflected in improvement in the vegetation cover. The spatial extent of moderately dense vegetation cover, which was 129 ha in 1996, has risen to 152 ha in 2000. Though the satellite data used in the study depicts the terrain conditions during 1996, implementation activities started only in 1998. It is, therefore, obvious that it will take considerable time for detectable changes in terrain and vegetation conditions (Dwivedi et al. 2003).

Using GIS and survey data, the watersheds in India, Thailand and Vietnam were characterized for the distribution of natural resources like soils, climate, water resources and land use systems at the initiation of the watershed projects. In India, the watersheds in Andhra Pradesh (Kothapally, Malleboinpally, Appayapalli, Thirumalapuram, Nemmikal and Kacharam) and Madhya Pradesh (Lateri and Rignodia) were characterized; also Tad Fa watershed in Thailand and Thanh Ha watershed in Vietnam were characterized. Using remote sensing and GIS technology it was observed that there were significant improvements in the vegetation cover in Kothapally watershed in Andhra Pradesh and Lateri watershed in Madhya Pradesh with the introduction and adoption of improved resource management and crop production technologies over the period of five years.

## Spatial Simulation Modelling

The action plan for watershed essentially aims at reducing soil loss, improving ground or surface water harvesting and improving crop productivity. Spatial modeling and integration of point models in spatial domain have greater significance in watershed studies to achieve above mentioned goals. They can enhance the impacts of agricultural research in watershed development. Simulation modeling using the surface and ground water balance models and crop growth model enables to optimize the use of water resources in the watershed and to minimize the gap between the achievable yield and potential yield.

Assessing long-term impacts of various management options on carbon sequestration, environmental balance, land degradation, etc. could be assessed using simulation modeling approaches, which would otherwise, not be possible using conventional approaches on a routine basis (Sreedevi et al., 2009).

Temporal acquisition of satellite data during crop growing season enables to monitor the crop growth with the help of biophysical parameters like LAI (leaf area index), soil / crop moisture, NDVI, etc., and when coupled with spatio-dynamic modeling facilities in GIS, scenario generation is quite possible for crop intensification analysis besides the sustainability assessment of the systems. There is a need to incorporate these dynamic parameters in refining prioritized watersheds for effective utilization of resources.

Baseline data generated using above tools forms the basic input to characterize the watershed spatially and also provides necessary inputs for spatial models after proper translation. While preparing any action plan aiming at overall development of watershed it is essential to visualize the impact of interference done with the existing environment. Better Assessment Science Integrating point and Nonpoint Sources (BASINS), Soil and Water Assessment Tool (SWAT) are some of the comprehensive models available in GIS environment that helps in modeling the watershed environment and visualizing the future scenarios.

To run the above continuous simulation models, it is essential to have updation of information on climate (rainfall, PET, radiation, temperature, wind velocity, LGP), soils (organic carbon, nutrients, bulk density, pH etc.) crops (cropping intensity, crops and their growth attributes, phenology, yield and yield attributes, pattern, cultivars, inputs applied), major plant nutrient uptake data, socioeconomic data (income sources, labor sources, input, output/income, infrastructure, etc), runoff and soil loss measurements and groundwater level (Wani 2002). In this aspect, the Sensor Web, GPS and communication networks have greater role to play.

## Use of ICT in Watershed Management

It is increasingly realized that facilitation of knowledge flows is a key in fostering new rural livelihood opportunities using modern information and communication technologies (ICTs). The concept adapted is one of intelligent intermediation for facilitation of flows of information and knowledge. The community centre managed by the PIAs functions as a Rural Information Hub connecting participating villages (or groups of villages, as the case may be) and also with other Internet connected websites (Fig. 15). It is operated or managed by a rural group (women or youth SHGs) identified by the village watershed council through a consultative process. The activities on this module are planned to adopt a hub-and-spokes model for information dissemination among the participants and stakeholders. The electronic network across select nuclear watersheds enables sharing of experience and best practices.

*Figure 15. Information and communication technology services enabled at Addakal, Mahabubnagar district, Andhra Pradesh, India.*

## Summary

Application of new science tools in rain-fed agriculture opens up new vistas for development through integrated watershed management programs. These tools can help in improving the rural livelihoods and contributing substantially to meet the millennium development goals of halving the number of hungry people by 2015 and achieving food security through enhanced use efficiency of scarce natural resources such as land and water in the tropical countries. Till now rain-fed areas of the SAT did not get much benefit of new science tools but the recent research using these tools such as simulation modeling, remote sensing, GIS as well as satellite-based monitoring of the natural resources in the SAT has shown that not only the effectiveness of the research is enhanced substantially but also the cost efficiency and impact are enhanced. The remarkable developments in space technology currently offers satellites which provide better spatial and spectral resolutions, more frequent revisits, stereo viewing and on board recording capabilities. Thus, the high spatial and temporal resolution satellite data could be effectively used for watershed management and monitoring activities at land ownership level. By using crop simulation modeling approach, yield gap analyses for the major crops in Asia, Africa and WANA regions revealed that the yields could be doubled with the existing technologies. The GIS systems helped in speedy analysis of voluminous data and more rationale decision in less time to target the investments as well as to monitor the large number of interventions in the SAT. The satellite-based techniques along with GIS helped in identifying the vast fallow areas (2 million ha) in Madhya Pradesh during the rainy season. These techniques are also successfully used for preparing detailed thematic maps, watershed development plans and continuous monitoring of the natural resources in the country in rain-fed areas. The synergy of GIS and web technology allows access to dynamic geospatial watershed information without burdening the users with complicated and expensive software. Use of ICT in IWMP can bridge the existing gap to reach millions of small farm holders; new science tools when applied in IWMP can substantially enhance planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of IWMP in the country. Use of smart sensor network along with GIS, RS, simulation modeling and ICT opens up new opportunities for developing intelligent watershed management information systems.

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