

# Original Research Article

## Characterization and Classification of Soils of Jalna District of Marathwada Region by Using Remote Sensing and GIS Techniques

### ABSTRACT

The present investigation entitled on "Characterization and Classification of Soils of Jalna District of Marathwada Region by Using Remote Sensing and GIS Technique" was carried out to characterize and classify the soil based on their morphological, physical, and chemical properties. Satellite data (LISS-III) and DEM were interpreted for terrain features. Ten representative pedons from different landform units were collected and analyzed. The Morphological, physical and chemical properties of soils were varied in relation to topographic positions. The soils were very shallow to very deep (19 to 150 cm), Black (10YR 2/1) to Pale brown (10YR6/3) and Dark reddish brown (5YR3/2) to reddish brown (5YR4/4) in colour, medium weak sub angular blocky to medium strong angular blocky in structure, slightly hard to very hard in dry, friable to firm in moist and in wet condition slightly sticky slightly plastic to very sticky very plastic in consistency. The bulk density of study area varied from 1.19 to 1.84 Mg m<sup>-3</sup>, the saturated hydraulic conductivity of the study area varied from 0.21 to 8.47 cm hr<sup>-1</sup>, Particle size distribution of sand, silt and clay content of the study area varied from 0.61 to 52.10, 17.33 to 42.80 and 15.16 to 72.96 percent respectively, AWC ranged from 5.65 to 23.52 percent and plant available water capacity (PAWC) varied from 40.68 to 399.82 mm. The soils were slightly alkaline to strongly alkaline (7.44 to 8.74), very low to high (0.11 to 0.86) in organic carbon, slightly calcareous to strongly calcareous in CaCO<sub>3</sub> (3.50 to 22.50), CEC varied from 23.62 to 68.71 cmol(P<sup>+</sup>) kg<sup>-1</sup>. The exchangeable cations were in the order of Ca<sup>2+</sup> > Mg<sup>2+</sup> > Na<sup>+</sup> > K<sup>+</sup>, whereas Base saturation varied from 82.11 to 105.08 %. The ESP varied from 2.81 to 12.44 percent. Taxonomically these soils were classified into Entisols, Inceptisols and Vertisols and at the subgroup level these soils were classified as Typic Ustorthents (P<sub>5</sub>, P<sub>7</sub> and P<sub>10</sub>), Typic Haplustepts (P<sub>9</sub>), Calcic Haplustepts (P<sub>1</sub> and P<sub>3</sub>), Typic Haplusterts (P<sub>4</sub> and P<sub>6</sub>), Calcic Haplusterts (P<sub>2</sub> and P<sub>8</sub>). This study highlights significant soil variability, providing essential data for effective soil and land use management.

**Keywords:** *Pedology, physico-chemical properties, remote sensing, GIS, soil morphology, soil taxonomy, soil classification, soil profile, pedons, sustainable agriculture*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Soil is a vital natural resource, fundamental to sustainable development and agricultural productivity. Understanding its distribution across the landscape, along with its characteristics and properties, is crucial for its effective, optimal, and sustainable use. However, indiscriminate use of land resources often leads to degradation and a consequent decline in productivity. To ensure long-term benefits, land resources must be utilized according to their

capacity to meet the needs of the population. Achieving this requires thorough investigation and scientific evaluation of these resources, enabling informed decision-making and sustainable land management practices. (Warhade *et al.* 2022; Ingle *et al.*, 2019; Kuchanware *et al.* 2021). Understanding soil types and their properties is essential for optimizing crop production in semi-arid regions, where seasonal droughts are frequent. A systematic study of soils, guided by well-defined taxonomic units, forms the foundation for effective land appraisal, crop planning, and agricultural development in these challenging ecosystems. Consequently, soil characterization, classification, and evaluation for specific applications are crucial (Purandhar and Naidu, 2020). Comprehensive knowledge of a soil's morphological, physical, chemical, and biological attributes, along with its spatial distribution, is vital for formulating appropriate land use plans and facilitating the transfer of agrotechnology (Buol *et al.*, 2011).

Systematic study and characterization of soil resources is the basic need for developing the sustainable agricultural land use plan at farm level. Maintaining high productivity of soil on a sustainable basis is an important for meeting the basic needs of the farmers. The importance of soil survey and mapping for preparing an inventory of a region, the soil properties are used for the evaluation of soil for different crops. The value of soil resource inventory for increasing food production and conservation of natural resources has been receiving significant importance not only for the soil resource database generated but also its quality (Eswaran and Gathrie, 1982; Ingle *et al.* 2024). The resources particularly soil and land needs not only protection and reclamation but also a scientific basis for the management on a sustainable manner so that the changes proposed to meet the needs of development are brought without diminishing the potential for their future use.

Remote sensing technology has demonstrated potential of identifying, characterizing, and classifying the problems and potentialities of the natural resources. Satellite remote sensing data has emerged as a vital tool in soil resource survey and generation of information, which help to evolve the optimum land use plan for sustainable development at scale ranging from regional to micro level (Sahu *et al.* 2015). Remote sensing technology together with GIS has spined off the new dimensions in storing and retrieving data and to arrive at optimum solution plan / action plan for sustainable development. In the interpretation of satellite image for soil mapping, proper identification of land type of drainage pattern and drainage condition, vegetation, land use, slope and relief are very essential. Several others have reported that the satellite remote sensing and GIS have proved as promising tool in soil resource mapping. (Shrivastava and Saxena 2004; Reddy *et al.* 2013; Borse *et al.* 2018 and Vimal *et al.*, 2024).

Due to the variations in physiography, the soils in the Jalna district of the Marathwada region are not universally suitable for the same crops or management practices. Therefore, it is essential to develop large-scale, soil-specific land use plans using GIS-based Decision Support Systems (DSS). Many farmers lack awareness of appropriate land use planning tailored to their available resources, including soil, water, and climate, which is crucial for their socioeconomic development. The GIS and RS-based DSS aids farmers by providing solutions to their challenges and guiding them in implementing suitable land use plans to enhance their socioeconomic progress. By simplifying the process for both farmers and researchers, this DSS bridges the gap between laboratory research

and practical application, making the transfer of technology to the field more efficient. With these considerations, the present study, titled “Characterization and Classification of Soils of Jalna District of the Marathwada Region Using Remote Sensing and GIS Techniques,” was undertaken.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Jalna district is approximately at the centre of Maharashtra state and in the northern direction of Marathwada region. The Jalna district lies between  $19^{\circ} 01'$  to  $21^{\circ} 03'$  N Latitudes and  $75^{\circ} 04'$  to  $76^{\circ} 04'$  E Longitude. It covers an area of about 7,612 sq. Kms, which is 2.47% of the total state area. Geologically the district essentially belongs to Deccan traps (middle traps) as the district is a part of Deccan plateau sloping south-eastwards from the Sahyadris. The middle traps are supposed to fit in between these two broad divisions i.e. Alluvium recent of sub-recent and Deccan trap-Cretaceous-Eocene. The district has a Sub-Tropical climate, in which the bulk of rainfall is received from the southwest monsoon, between June to September. The average annual rainfall of the district ranges between 650 to 750 mm. The district often experiences drought with rainfall recording as low as 400 to 450 mm. The district has moderately to gently sloping undulated topography ((Jalna district, NIC, GOI. May 01, 2024).

The broad landforms were extracted by using SOI topographical sheet and the SRTM DEM (30m resolution) was used to prepare a contour, slope, aspect, drainage and Hillshade map in the Arc-GIS environment. Survey of India (SOI) toposheet No. 43D/9, 43D/10, 43D/11, 43D/12, 43D/13, 43D/14, 43D/15, 43E/2, 43E/3, 43V/12, 43V/14, 43V/16, 43W/3, 43W/4 (1:50,000 scale) was used to collect topographic and location information. The toposheets were georeferenced and merged to prepare base map for different landforms, generation of slope and drainage for planning the traverse route for ground truth collection. The ten soil profiles were positioned in each of the identified landforms. Soil morphological characteristics were noted in the fields and horizon-wise samples were collected from each pedon as per the guideline given by Soil Survey Staff (1975). Samples were analyzed in the laboratory for their physical, chemical, and biological characteristics.

After collection, the soil samples were allowed to dry in shaded ground and sieved by using a 2 mm sieve and analyzed by standard procedures. The bulk density of the soil was determined by the clod coating method (Black 1965). Particle size distribution analysis of the sample was carried out by the international pipette method (Jackson 1973). Hydraulic conductivity was determined by the constant head method (Richards 1954). Water retention at 33 kPa and 1500 kPa pressure were determined by pressure plate apparatus and plant available water capacity (PAWC) was determined as outlined by Gardner *et al.* 1984. The pH and electrical conductivity (EC) were determined by standard procedure (Jackson 1979), while organic carbon (OC) was determined by Walkley and Black (1934) and cation exchange capacity (CEC) was determined by the procedure as outlined by Jackson (1973). The  $\text{CaCO}_3$  was determined by the method outlined by Jackson (1973) and exchangeable cations were determined by the method of Richards (1954). The soil classification was carried out by Soil Survey Staff (2014).

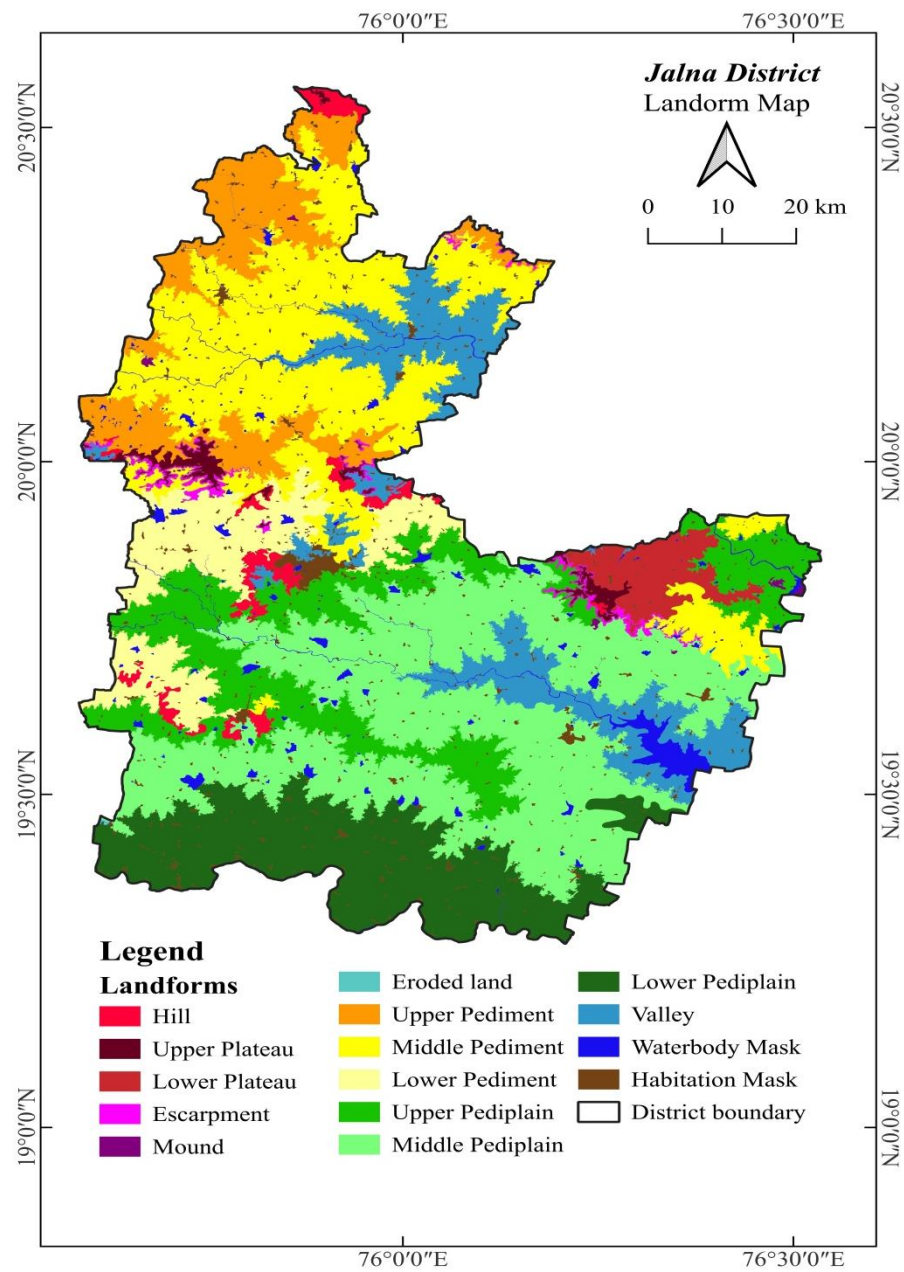
## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### **3.1 Landforms**

A detailed landform analysis was carried out based on elevation contour, slope, and drainage channel network. Contour lines created at different heights were superimposed on the picture to create a landform map, which included eleven key landform units: (i) hilltop; (ii) higher plateau; (iii) lower plateau; and (iv) undulating upland and interpreted the slopes of the escarpment (v), the foot slopes (vi), the upper pediment (viii), the middle pediment (ix), the lower pediment (x), the pediplain (xi), and the valley and water body (xi) were delineated using SOI toposheet, SRTM (30m) data of digital elevation model and IRS-6 LISS III FCC. The DEM was further used to delineate four slope classes namely level (0-1%) nearly level plane (1-3% slope), undulating (3-8% slope) rolling (8-16%), hilly (16-30%), steep (30-60%) and very steep (>60 %). The soil profile samples were analyzed and classified on cultivated areas only.

### **3.2 Soil Morphological characteristics**

The soils on the higher topographic position were shallow and gradually became deeper down the slope, shallow to moderately shallow on the undulating lands. Further down the slope near the upland valley region, soil depth was found moderately deep. The depth was deep to very deep in the alluvial pediplain near the valley. The soil depth ranged from 19 to 64 cm on the hilly and undulating landscape of pedons P<sub>5</sub>, P<sub>7</sub>, and P<sub>10</sub> (Typic Ustorthents), and from 42 to 60 cm on the upper pediment with nearly level plains in pedons P<sub>9</sub> (Typic Haplustepts) and P<sub>1</sub> and P<sub>3</sub> (Calcic Haplustepts). The soil depth ranged from 120 to 150 cm on leveled plains close to the valley pedons P<sub>2</sub> and P<sub>8</sub> (Calcic Haplusterts) and P<sub>4</sub> and P<sub>6</sub> (Typic Haplusterts). The soil colour of study area varies from Black (10YR 2/1) to Pale brown (10YR6/3) and Dark reddish brown (5YR3/2) to Reddish brown (5YR4/4). Soils developed on topographically higher elevations were dark brown and those formed on lower elevations were very dark greyish brown in colour (Maji *et al.* 2005). The presence of titaniferous magnetite mineral and clay-humus complexes contribute to the black colour (Chandran and Singh 2012). The dark colour of soil may be due to the dominance of highly dispersible forms of humus and smectite minerals (Zoon 1986). Variation in soil colour appears to reflect chemical and mineralogical composition and also the textural makeup and it is majorly influenced by topographical positions and moisture regime of the area (Sekhar *et al.* 2014; Nasre *et al.* 2013; Patil *et al.* 2013 and Ingle *et al.*, 2024).



**Fig 1 Lanform map of Jalna district**

**Table 1. Soil site characteristics of Jalna district of Maharashtra**

| Location   | Landform           | Parent material   | Slope | Runoff    | Drainage              | Erosion   | Stoniness % |
|--|--------------------|-------------------|-------|-----------|-----------------------|-----------|-------------|
| <b>Pedon 1</b> TithapuriTq. Ghansavangi, Dist. Jalna<br>19° 25' 57" N, 75° 56' 53" E | Nearly level Plain | Weathered Basalt  | 0-1   | Slow      | Permeable             | Very Slow | <3          |
| <b>Pedon 2</b> BhutegaonTq. Ghansavangi Dist. Jalna. 19° 39' 47" N, 76° 02' 16" E    | Nearly level Plain | Basaltic alluvium | 1-3   | Slow      | Impermeable           | Moderate  | <3          |
| <b>Pedon 3</b> ShelgaonTq. Partur, Dist. Jalna<br>19° 28' 52.87" N, 76° 19' 03.02"E  | Moderately Sloping | Weathered Basalt  | 1-3   | Medium    | Well drained          | Sever     | <3          |
| <b>Pedon 4</b> WadhonaTq. Partur, Dist. Jalna<br>19° 37' 50.23" N, 76° 16' 51.74" E  | Level Plain        | Basaltic alluvium | 0-1   | Very Slow | Impermeable           | Very Slow | <3          |
| <b>Pedon 5</b> Wadi SeradoneTq. Ambad, Dist. Jalna.<br>19° 39' 34" N, 75° 44' 17" E  | Moderately Sloping | Weathered Basalt  | 3-5   | Medium    | Well drained          | Moderate  | 15-40       |
| <b>Pedon 6</b> Sawargaontq. Jalna, Dist. Jalna<br>19° 47' 55" N, 76° 02' 56" E       | Moderately Sloping | Basaltic alluvium | 1-3   | Slow      | Impermeable           | Moderate  | <3          |
| <b>Pedon 7</b> Asola Tq. Badnapur, Dist. Jalna<br>19° 56' 46" N, 75° 50' 31" E       | Undulating         | Weathered Basalt  | 3-5   | Medium    | Well drained          | Moderate  | 3-15        |
| <b>Pedon 8</b> Khamkheda Tq.Jafrabad,Dist. Jalna<br>20° 10' 50" N, 76° 01' 17" E     | Moderately Sloping | Basaltic alluvium | 1-3   | Medium    | Moderate              | Slight    | <3          |
| <b>Pedon 9</b> Malkapur, Tq.Bhokardan, Dist. Jalna<br>20° 18' 30" N, 75° 46' 49" E   | Gently Sloping     | Weathered Basalt  | 1-3   | Slow      | Moderate Well drained | Moderate  | <3          |
| <b>Pedon 10</b> Asai, Tq.JafrabadDist. Jalna<br>20° 15' 17" N, 75° 53' 15" E         | Undulating         | Weathered Basalt  | 3-5   | Rapid     | Well drained          | Severe    | 3-15        |

**Table 2 Morphological characteristics of soils of Jalna district of Maharashtra**

| Horizon  | Depth (cm) | Boundary |   | Matrix Colour | Texture | Structure |       |      | Consistency |       |      | Pores |          | Root |          | Effervescences |  |
|--|------------|----------|---|---------------|---------|-----------|-------|------|-------------|-------|------|-------|----------|------|----------|----------------|--|
|  |            | D        | T |               |         | Size      | Grade | Type | Dry         | Moist | Wet  | Size  | Quantity | Size | Quantity |                |  |
| <b>Pedon 2(Very fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic,CalcicHaplusterts)</b>  |            |          |   |               |         |           |       |      |             |       |      |       |          |      |          |                |  |
| Ap   | 0-18       | c        | s | 10YR4/2       | c       | m         | 2     | sbk  | h           | fr    | vsvp | vf,f  | m,m      | vf   | m        | e              |  |
| Bw <sub>1</sub>  | 18-32      | c        | s | 10YR4/2       | c       | m         | 2     | abk  | h           | fr    | vsvp | vf,f  | m,m      | f    | f        | e              |  |
| Bw <sub>2</sub>  | 32-58      | c        | s | 10YR3/1       | c       | m         | 3     | abk  | h           | fi    | vsvp | vf,f  | m,m      | f    | m        | e              |  |
| Bss <sub>1</sub>   | 58-85      | c        | s | 10YR3/2       | c       | m         | 3     | abk  | vh          | fi    | vsvp | vf,f  | m,m      | f    | f        | e              |  |
| Bss <sub>2</sub>   | 85-120     | c        | s | 10YR3/2       | c       | m         | 3     | abk  | vh          | fi    | vsvp | vf,f  | m,m      | f    | f        | e              |  |
| Bss <sub>3</sub>   | 120-150    | c        | s | 10YR3/2       | c       | m         | 3     | abk  | vh          | fi    | vsvp | vf,f  | m,m      | f    | f        | e              |  |
| <b>Pedon 3(Fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic Calcic Haplustepts)</b>      |            |          |   |               |         |           |       |      |             |       |      |       |          |      |          |                |  |
| Ap   | 0-20       | c        | S | 10YR3/2       | c       | m         | 2     | sbk  | sh          | fr    | vsvp | vf,f  | m,m      | f    | m        | e              |  |
| Bw <sub>1</sub>  | 20-40      | d        | w | 10YR3/1       | c       | m         | 2     | sbk  | sh          | fr    | vsvp | vf,f  | m,m      | f    | f        | es             |  |
| Bw <sub>2</sub>  | 40-60      | d        | w | 10YR3/1       | c       | m         | 2     | abk  | sh          | fr    | vsvp | vf,f  | m,m      | f    | f        | es             |  |
| Cr   | 60+        |          | - | 10YR5/2       | l       | m         | 2     | gr   | l           | fr    | nsnp | c     | f        | -    | -        | ev             |  |
| <b>Pedon 4 (Fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic, Typic Haplusterts)</b>     |            |          |   |               |         |           |       |      |             |       |      |       |          |      |          |                |  |
| Ap   | 0-20       | c        | s | 10YR3/2       | c       | m         | 3     | sbk  | h           | h     | vsvp | vf,f  | m,m      | vf,c | m,f      | e              |  |
| Bw <sub>1</sub>  | 20-39      | c        | s | 10YR3/1       | c       | m         | 3     | abk  | h           | fr    | vsvp | vf,f  | m,m      | f    | m        | e              |  |
| Bw <sub>2</sub>  | 39-51      | c        | s | 10YR2/2       | c       | m         | 3     | abk  | vh          | fi    | vsvp | vf,f  | m,m      | f    | m        | e              |  |
| Bss <sub>1</sub>   | 51-78      | c        | s | 10YR2/1       | c       | m         | 3     | abk  | vh          | fi    | vsvp | vf,f  | m,m      | f    | f        | e              |  |
| Bss <sub>2</sub>   | 78-98      | c        | s | 10YR2/2       | c       | m         | 3     | abk  | vh          | fi    | vsvp | vf,f  | m,m      | f    | f        | e              |  |
| Bss <sub>3</sub>   | 98-150     | c        | s | 10YR4/2       | c       | m         | 3     | abk  | vh          | fi    | vsvp | f     | m        | f    | f        | e              |  |
| <b>Pedon 5 (Fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic Typic Ustorthents)</b>      |            |          |   |               |         |           |       |      |             |       |      |       |          |      |          |                |  |
| Ap   | 0-22       | c        | s | 5YR3/3        | l       | m         | 2     | sbk  | s           | fr    | sssp | vf,f  | m,m      | vf,  | m        | nil            |  |
| Cr   | 22+        | c        | s | 5YR3/4        | Sl      | c         | 2     | gr   | h           | fr    | nsnp | c     | f        | c    | f        | nil            |  |
| <b>Pedon 9(Very fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic, Typic Haplustepts)</b> |            |          |   |               |         |           |       |      |             |       |      |       |          |      |          |                |  |
| Ap   | 0-21       | c        | s | 10YR3/2       | sic     | m         | 2     | sbk  | sh          | fr    | sssp | vf,f  | m,m      | vf,c | mm       | e              |  |
| Bw <sub>1</sub>  | 21-42      | c        | s | 10YR3/2       | sic     | m         | 2     | sbk  | sh          | fr    | sssp | vf,f  | m        | vf,c | mf       | es             |  |
| Cr   | 42+        | d        | s | 10YR6/3       | l       | c         | 2     | gr   | l           | l     | nsnp | c     | m        | f    | f        | es             |  |

The soil consistency in pedons of Typic Ustorthents (Entisols) (P<sub>5</sub> and P<sub>7</sub> and P<sub>10</sub>) varied from, soft to slightly hard in dry, friable to very friable in moist and slightly sticky slightly plastic to non sticky non plastic in wet condition. Whereas, in Typic and Calcic Haplustepts (P<sub>1</sub>, P<sub>3</sub> and P<sub>9</sub>) soil consistency varied from slightly hard to very hard in dry, friable to firm in moist and slightly sticky slightly plastic to very sticky very plastic in wet condition. In Typic and Calcic Haplusterts (Vertisols) (P<sub>4</sub> , P<sub>6</sub> , P<sub>2</sub> and P<sub>8</sub>) soil consistency varied from slightly hard to very hard in dry, friable to firm in moist and very sticky very plastic to slightly sticky very plastic in wet condition. Furthermore, result shows that the soil consistency in Vertisols and Inceptisols was found to be hard to very hard in dry conditions, firm to very firm in moist conditions, slightly sticky to very sticky and plastic to very plastic in wet conditions which might be due to high clay content of the soil (Vaidya and Pal, 2002; Geetha *et al.*, 2017 and Patil, 2023).

The soil structure in Typic Ustorthents (Entisols) (P<sub>5</sub> and P<sub>7</sub> and P<sub>10</sub>) varied from medium weak subangular blocky to fine or medium moderate subangular blocky whereas in lower layers of P<sub>7</sub> coarse weak granular structure was observed. The medium moderate subangular blocky to medium strong angular blocky structure was observed in Typic (P<sub>9</sub>) and Calcic (P<sub>1</sub> and P<sub>3</sub>) Haplustepts. Whereas, in Typic (P<sub>4</sub> and P<sub>6</sub>) and CalcicHaplusterts (P<sub>2</sub> and P<sub>8</sub>) had medium moderate subangular blocky to medium strong angular blocky structure. The surface and sub-surface horizons of pedons are associated with sub-angular blocky structure of varying grade and size but angular blocky structure associated with slickenside is a common feature of sub-soils in Vertisols (Dhale and Prasad 2009). The blocky structure *i.e.*, angular and subangular blocky structure was attributed to the presence of higher quantity of clay fraction (Sekhar *et al.*, 2014 and Sharma *et al.*, 2004). The single grained structure was due to inert nature of parent material. Shrinking and swelling of clay due to wetting and drying cycles resulted in formation of pedogenic slickensides, angular to sub angular peds and wedge-shaped structural aggregates (Vaidya, 2001; Patil *et al.*, 2013 and Ghodeet *et al.*, 2023).

### **3.3 Soil Physical characteristics**

The bulk density of study area varied from 1.19 to 1.84 Mg m<sup>-3</sup>. The variation in bulk density of these soils was due to high amount of expanding type of clay minerals (Sekhar *et al.*, 2014 and Zade *et al.*, 2020). In comparison to the murum layer (C horizon), the bulk density of the surface (A horizon) and subsurface (B horizon) layers is lower. The increasing bulk density with depth was observed which might be due to compaction caused by the overburden of surface layers (Ingle *et al.* 2019; Kuchanwaret *al* 2021). The subsurface layer's bulk density was often found to be greater than that of the surface layer. The findings suggest that bulk density increased gradually with depth. This phenomenon may be attributed to various factors such as compaction from overburdening the surface layer (Thangasamy *et al.*, 2005).

The saturated hydraulic conductivity (sHC) of the study area varied from 0.21 to 8.47 cm hr<sup>-1</sup>, The sHC in all the Pedons decreased with depth except in P<sub>5</sub>, P<sub>7</sub> and P<sub>10</sub> were observed increases with depth which may be due to textural differences of soils. The decreasing trend of sHC with depth in swell shrinks

soils might be due to increasing clay content with depth as this fact is evident from the significant and negative correlation of sHC with soil depth (-0.664\*) (Table 5). Similar results were also reported by Vaidya and Pal, 2002 and Kadu *et al.*, 2003. The higher value of sHC of surface horizons was found in some pedons which may be due to porous nature because of continuous tillage operations and organic carbon content (Kuchanwar, *et al.* 2017). The higher exchangeable  $Mg^{++}$  in soil profile causes dispersion of clay colloid and reduction in hydraulic conductivity this fact is evident from significant and negative correlation between hydraulic conductivity and exchangeable magnesium ( $r = -0.687^*$ ) (Vaidya and Pal, 2002; Kadu and Kharche, 2017; Zade *et al.*, 2020; Warhade *et al.*, 2022; Kuchanwar *et al.*, 2022).

The sand, silt and clay content of the study area varied from 0.61 to 52.10, 17.33 to 42.80 and 15.16 to 72.96 per cent respectively. Soils of P<sub>1</sub>, P<sub>2</sub>, P<sub>3</sub>, P<sub>4</sub>, P<sub>6</sub>, P<sub>8</sub> and P<sub>9</sub> were clayey to silty clayey in texture. Whereas, P<sub>5</sub>, P<sub>7</sub> and P<sub>10</sub> were clay loam to sandy clay loam in texture. The texture of the soils on the lower slopes varied from silty clay to clay, the upper slopes (P<sub>5</sub>, P<sub>7</sub>, and P<sub>10</sub>) had sandy clay loams to loams (Sarkar *et al.*, 2001). The amount of clay in all pedons (P<sub>1</sub>, P<sub>2</sub>, P<sub>3</sub>, P<sub>4</sub>, P<sub>6</sub>, P<sub>8</sub>, and P<sub>9</sub>) were increased with depth, whereas in pedons (P<sub>5</sub>, P<sub>7</sub>, and P<sub>10</sub>) pedons dropped with depth.

The increase in clay content with depth might be due to downward translocation of finer clay particles from surface layer to subsurface layer (Murthy, 1988). Enrichment of the clay in Bw horizon of pedons (P<sub>1</sub>, P<sub>2</sub>, P<sub>3</sub>, P<sub>8</sub>) and Bss horizons of pedons (P<sub>2</sub>, P<sub>4</sub>, P<sub>6</sub>, P<sub>8</sub>) of study area was primarily due to in situ weathering of parent material (Sarkar *et al.*, 2002). The enrichment of the clay in the Bss horizon was likely due to the illuviation of clay from upper horizons (Pal *et al.* 2009). For a long time the apparent uniform distribution of clay throughout Vertisols was considered to be effect of haploidisation within the pedon caused by pedoturbation and in some cases the observed gradual increase in clay content with depth was thought to be due to inheritance from parent material (Pal., D.K. 2018). Silt content shows irregular trend with depth might be due variation in weathering of parent material or in situ formation (Kumar and Naidu, 2012).

**Table 3 Physical characteristics of soils of Jalna district of Maharashtra**

| Horizon   | Depth (cm) | Layer (cm) | Coarse fragments % | BD (Mg m <sup>-3</sup> ) | HC (cm hr <sup>-1</sup> ) | Particle size analysis (%) |       |       | Moisture retention (%) |         | AWC (%) | PAWC mm |
|---|------------|------------|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-------|-------|------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
|   |            |            |                    |                          |                           | Sand                       | Silt  | Clay  | 33 kPa                 | 1500kPa |         |         |
| <b>Pedon 2(Very fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic, Calcic Haplusterts)</b> |            |            |                    |                          |                           |                            |       |       |                        |         |         |         |
| Ap  | 0-18       | 18         | 6.58               | 1.32                     | 7.26                      | 1.70                       | 34.08 | 64.20 | 39.43                  | 27.68   | 11.76   |         |
| Bw <sub>1</sub>   | 18-32      | 14         | 7.38               | 1.52                     | 4.24                      | 0.88                       | 38.12 | 60.99 | 42.02                  | 26.82   | 15.19   |         |
| Bw <sub>2</sub>   | 32-58      | 26         | 9.45               | 1.57                     | 1.40                      | 0.72                       | 31.25 | 68.04 | 40.99                  | 24.01   | 16.98   | 373.54  |
| Bss <sub>1</sub>  | 58-85      | 27         | 11.66              | 1.57                     | 1.04                      | 0.84                       | 30.05 | 69.11 | 41.38                  | 26.09   | 15.29   |         |
| Bss <sub>2</sub>  | 85-120     | 35         | 12.98              | 1.61                     | 0.21                      | 0.61                       | 26.43 | 72.96 | 47.55                  | 30.27   | 17.28   |         |
| Bss <sub>3</sub>  | 120-150    | 30         | 14.88              | 1.69                     | 0.33                      | 1.80                       | 37.16 | 61.01 | 26.19                  | 9.57    | 16.61   |         |
| <b>Pedon 3(Fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic Calcic Haplustepts)</b>       |            |            |                    |                          |                           |                            |       |       |                        |         |         |         |
| Ap  | 0-20       | 20         | 9.14               | 1.19                     | 4.71                      | 2.7                        | 37.9  | 59.4  | 37.45                  | 25.35   | 12.09   |         |
| Bw <sub>1</sub>   | 20-40      | 20         | 15.69              | 1.37                     | 2.28                      | 3.6                        | 42.8  | 53.6  | 27.71                  | 13.18   | 14.53   | 104.26  |
| Bw <sub>2</sub>   | 40-60      | 20         | 22.54              | 1.37                     | 1.88                      | 4.0                        | 37.6  | 58.5  | 38.59                  | 25.55   | 13.04   |         |
| Cr  | 60+        |            | 40.22              | 1.75                     | 9.64                      | 31.6                       | 44.7  | 23.7  | 32.53                  | 21.04   | 11.48   |         |
| <b>Pedon 4 (Fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic, Typic Haplusterts)</b>      |            |            |                    |                          |                           |                            |       |       |                        |         |         |         |
| Ap  | 0-20       | 20         | 8.54               | 1.28                     | 1.32                      | 1.3                        | 37.7  | 61.0  | 39.41                  | 26.40   | 13.01   |         |
| Bw <sub>1</sub>   | 20-39      | 19         | 10.64              | 1.36                     | 1.24                      | 5.75                       | 35.35 | 58.90 | 36.46                  | 24.91   | 11.56   |         |
| Bw <sub>2</sub>   | 39-51      | 12         | 15.44              | 1.44                     | 1.04                      | 1.49                       | 36.30 | 62.16 | 37.31                  | 25.88   | 11.43   | 399.82  |
| Bss <sub>1</sub>  | 51-78      | 27         | 17.88              | 1.60                     | 0.98                      | 1.06                       | 34.06 | 64.88 | 37.66                  | 24.85   | 12.81   |         |
| Bss <sub>2</sub>  | 78-98      | 20         | 17.92              | 1.69                     | 0.89                      | 1.82                       | 37.57 | 60.62 | 30.22                  | 16.03   | 14.20   |         |
| Bss <sub>3</sub>  | 98-150     | 52         | 18.02              | 1.74                     | 0.66                      | 1.65                       | 38.42 | 59.93 | 52.40                  | 28.88   | 23.52   |         |
| <b>Pedon 5 (Fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic Typic Ustorthents)</b>       |            |            |                    |                          |                           |                            |       |       |                        |         |         |         |
| Ap  | 0-22       | 22         | 14.33              | 1.40                     | 2.74                      | 49.3                       | 35.5  | 15.16 | 26.48                  | 15.42   | 11.07   | 34.2    |
| Cr  | 22+        |            | 42.33              | 1.65                     | 8.49                      | 57.32                      | 28.64 | 14.02 | 29.29                  | 18.90   | 10.39   |         |
| <b>Pedon 9 (Very fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic, Typic Haplustepts)</b> |            |            |                    |                          |                           |                            |       |       |                        |         |         |         |
| Ap  | 0-21       | 21         | 10.22              | 1.39                     | 1.75                      | 11.5                       | 41.13 | 47.35 | 36.03                  | 25.44   | 10.59   |         |
| Bw <sub>1</sub>   | 21-42      | 21         | 16.64              | 1.67                     | 1.27                      | 12.78                      | 40.97 | 46.26 | 33.21                  | 22.96   | 10.25   | 66.69   |
| Cr  | 42+        |            | 28.54              | 1.76                     | 4.38                      | 24.96                      | 49.09 | 25.96 | 38.83                  | 27.32   | 11.51   |         |

The soils with fine texture were found at the lowland topographic unit than the upland and midland units mainly due to lateral migration of finer fractions from upland and midlands difference in parent material, in situ weathering and the translocation of clay this fact is evident from significant and positive correlation ( $r=0.787^{**}$ ) (Table 5) between soil depth and clay content (Basvarajet *al.* (2005). Topography and slope were found responsible for variation in the particle size distribution of the soils (Vaidya and Pal, 2002; Ghode, *et al.* 2023). Topographically variation in soil texture is likely to be the variation in the intensity of erosion of upland and deposition of carried material on the lowland plains. The finer particles were readily translocated from higher elevated areas towards lower elevated areas due to rapid movement runoff of rainwater while coarse particles remained which could be the main cause of texture variation with slope (Vaidya, 2001; Patil *et al.* 2013; Meena *et al.* 2014 and Ghode *et al.* 2023).

PAWC of the study area were highest in P<sub>2</sub>, P<sub>4</sub>, P<sub>6</sub>, and P<sub>8</sub> followed by P<sub>1</sub>, P<sub>3</sub>, P<sub>7</sub> and P<sub>9</sub> and lowest in P<sub>5</sub> and P<sub>10</sub>. The order of PAWC of soils of study area was P<sub>2</sub> and P<sub>4</sub> (373.54 to 399.82 mm) > P<sub>6</sub> (302.98 mm) > P<sub>8</sub> (269.33 mm) > P<sub>3</sub> (104.26 mm) > P<sub>7</sub> (69.11 mm) > P<sub>1</sub> and P<sub>9</sub> (64.76 to 66.69 mm) > P<sub>7</sub> and P<sub>10</sub> (34.2 to 40.68). Moreover, the data revealed a highly significant and positive relation between PAWC with soil depth (0.981<sup>\*\*</sup>) and clay content (0.789<sup>\*\*</sup>) (Table 5) this indicated that the PAWC increased with an increase in depth and clay content.

### **3.4 Chemical characteristics of soils**

Soil reaction (pH) varied from slightly to strongly alkaline (7.44 to 8.74) (Table 4). Increasing trend with depth was observed be due to of movement of soluble salts and increase in calcium carbonate content (Vaidya and Pal, 2002; Meena *et al.*, 2014; Patel *et al.*, 2024). Higher pH in sub-surface soils is due to higher pedogenic CaCO<sub>3</sub> content, which forms NaHCO<sub>3</sub> and increases the pH (Vasu *et al.* 2022; Kuchanwaret *al.*, 2022). Electrical conductivity varied from 0.11 to 0.47 dSm<sup>-1</sup>. Low EC in the soils of study area might be due to proper management of soils and in that way leaching of salts takes place from upper surface horizon to sub surface horizon (Patil *et al.*, 2018). Organic carbon of study area varied from 0.11 (very low) to 0.86 (High) per cent (Table 4) and found decreased with soil depth in all the pedons. Relatively high organic carbon content in surface horizon may be due to the addition of cropped plant residues and farm yard manure to the surface horizon (Kumar and Prasad 2010). Similar results were observed by Sekhar *et al.*, 2017; Ghode *et al.*, 2018; Ingle *et al.*, 2021. The surface and sub-surface horizons of pedons P<sub>1</sub> to P<sub>10</sub> had CaCO<sub>3</sub> ranging from slightly to strongly calcareous (3.50 to 22.50 %). The distribution of calcium carbonate in soil profiles invariably shows an increasing pattern with increase in soil depth, which indicates the process of leaching down of calcium and subsequent precipitation at lower depth due to high pH level (Pal *et al.*, 1999 and Challa *et al.*, 2000) in the soils of semi-arid tropics of India.

**Table 4 Chemical characteristics of soils of Jalna District of Maharashtra**

| Horizon   | Depth (cm) | pH   | EC dSm <sup>-1</sup> | OC g/kg | CaCO <sub>3</sub> % | CEC Cmol(P <sup>+</sup> )kg <sup>-1</sup> | Exchangeable Cations [Cmol(P <sup>+</sup> )kg <sup>-1</sup> ] |                  |                |                 | Sum of Cation Cmol(P <sup>+</sup> )kg <sup>-1</sup> | B.S. % |
|---|------------|------|----------------------|---------|---------------------|---|---|------------------|----------------|-----------------|---|--------|
|   |            |      |                      |         |                     |   | Ca <sup>++</sup>  | Mg <sup>++</sup> | K <sup>+</sup> | Na <sup>+</sup> |   |        |
| <b>Pedon 2(Very fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic, Calcic Haplusterts)</b> |            |      |                      |         |                     |   |   |                  |                |                 |   |        |
| Ap  | 0-18       | 7.56 | 0.33                 | 5.66    | 10.5                | 59.47                                     | 45.61   | 6.66             | 1.21           | 2.70            | 56.17   | 94.46  |
| Bw <sub>1</sub>   | 18-32      | 7.68 | 0.43                 | 6.12    | 13.3                | 57.44                                     | 43.03   | 11.55            | 1.01           | 3.01            | 58.59   | 102.0  |
| Bw <sub>2</sub>   | 32-58      | 7.77 | 0.44                 | 4.74    | 13.25               | 61.48                                     | 41.18   | 11.80            | 1.01           | 3.99            | 57.98   | 94.31  |
| Bss <sub>1</sub>  | 58-85      | 8.14 | 0.41                 | 4.44    | 15.5                | 63.97                                     | 40.78   | 11.23            | 0.72           | 4.80            | 57.53   | 89.93  |
| Bss <sub>2</sub>  | 85-120     | 8.47 | 0.44                 | 4.29    | 16.25               | 68.71                                     | 36.96   | 12.86            | 0.77           | 4.80            | 55.40   | 80.62  |
| Bss <sub>3</sub>  | 120-150    | 8.58 | 0.47                 | 2.30    | 17.5                | 59.86                                     | 34.38   | 17.31            | 0.74           | 5.02            | 57.45   | 95.97  |
| <b>Pedon 3(Fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic Calcic Haplustepts)</b>       |            |      |                      |         |                     |   |   |                  |                |                 |   |        |
| Ap  | 0-20       | 8.08 | 0.43                 | 6.73    | 14.5                | 60.37                                     | 46.26   | 4.94             | 0.68           | 3.17            | 55.05   | 91.18  |
| Bw <sub>1</sub>   | 20-40      | 8.11 | 0.37                 | 4.59    | 20.5                | 51.22                                     | 42.36   | 8.98             | 0.66           | 3.55            | 55.55   | 100.28 |
| Bw <sub>2</sub>   | 40-60      | 8.08 | 0.28                 | 4.29    | 22.5                | 59.72                                     | 36.36   | 11.01            | 0.37           | 4.22            | 51.96   | 87.01  |
| Cr  | 60+        | 8.32 | 0.25                 | 0.31    | 23.25               | 51.24                                     | 33.92   | 4.54             | 0.26           | 4.26            | 42.98   | 83.89  |
| <b>Pedon 4 (Fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic, Typic Haplusterts)</b>      |            |      |                      |         |                     |   |   |                  |                |                 |   |        |
| Ap  | 0-20       | 7.97 | 0.18                 | 6.12    | 8.5                 | 66.70                                     | 52.46   | 6.15             | 0.98           | 2.25            | 61.84   | 92.72  |
| Bw <sub>1</sub>   | 20-39      | 8.13 | 0.13                 | 4.59    | 10.5                | 66.83                                     | 50.26   | 7.94             | 0.74           | 3.11            | 62.05   | 92.84  |
| Bw <sub>2</sub>   | 39-51      | 8.29 | 0.17                 | 4.13    | 10.5                | 61.49                                     | 49.94   | 8.27             | 0.49           | 4.44            | 63.14   | 102.68 |
| Bss <sub>1</sub>  | 51-78      | 8.43 | 0.22                 | 3.67    | 11.75               | 67.23                                     | 48.66   | 8.62             | 0.64           | 4.44            | 62.36   | 92.76  |
| Bss <sub>2</sub>  | 78-98      | 8.72 | 0.23                 | 3.37    | 12.25               | 58.33                                     | 37.87   | 12.21            | 0.32           | 4.86            | 55.26   | 94.74  |
| Bss <sub>3</sub>  | 98-150     | 8.74 | 0.32                 | 2.45    | 12.25               | 56.55                                     | 29.04   | 15.65            | 0.68           | 4.90            | 50.27   | 88.89  |
| <b>Pedon 5 (Fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic Typic Ustorthents)</b>       |            |      |                      |         |                     |   |   |                  |                |                 |   |        |
| Ap  | 0-22       | 7.84 | 0.14                 | 6.12    | 4.25                | 38.95                                     | 29.10   | 5.57             | 0.94           | 2.88            | 38.49   | 98.81  |
| Cr  | 22+        | 7.96 | 0.14                 | 3.83    | 10.5                | 48.22                                     | 22.29   | 3.58             | 0.38           | 2.86            | 29.12   | 60.38  |
| <b>Pedon 9 (Very fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic, Typic Haplustepts)</b> |            |      |                      |         |                     |   |   |                  |                |                 |   |        |
| Ap  | 0-21       | 7.44 | 0.32                 | 6.58    | 3.5                 | 48.66                                     | 36.19   | 36.19            | 1.25           | 3.59            | 45.56   | 93.63  |
| Bw <sub>1</sub>   | 21-42      | 7.92 | 0.34                 | 3.83    | 10.25               | 49.22                                     | 34.11   | 34.11            | 2.19           | 4.54            | 46.97   | 95.43  |
| Cr  | 42+        | 8.08 | 0.25                 | 0.92    | 13.75               | 32.22                                     | 26.21   | 22.21            | 0.12           | 5.10            | 31.03   | 96.32  |

This increasing trend of lime with depth was also observed by many researchers (Kadu et al., 2009; Adkineet al., 2018 and Ghodeet al., 2023). The higher CaCO<sub>3</sub> content may be due to the formation of pedogenic carbonate facilitated by the semi-arid climate and calcium-rich parent material (Kuchanwaret al., 2021; Vasu et al. 2022). Cation exchange capacity (CEC) of study area varied from 23.62 to 68.71 Cmol(P<sup>+</sup>) kg<sup>-1</sup>. The CEC in P<sub>2</sub> and P<sub>8</sub> (Calcic Haplusterts) was found higher followed by P<sub>4</sub> and P<sub>6</sub> (Typic Haplusterts), P<sub>1</sub> and P<sub>3</sub> (Calcic Haplustepts), P<sub>9</sub> (Typic Haplustepts), and lowest in P<sub>5</sub>, P<sub>7</sub>, P<sub>10</sub> (Typic Ustorthents). This variation in CEC of soils of study area might be due to of high amount of clay with smectitic mineralogy (Pal and Deshpande, 1987 and Kumar and Naidu, 2012). The CEC of soil increases with the increase in soil depth indicating the influence of clay on CEC (Gangopadhyay et al. 2022). The low CEC values were observed in Typic Ustorthents (P<sub>5</sub>, P<sub>7</sub> and P<sub>10</sub>) might be due to the low clay content in soil. Because of the quick weathering of the parent materials, low activity clays dominate the mineral composition of soils, as evidenced by the decrease in CEC with a rise in negative pH increasing altitude (Bandyopadhyay et al. 2018). The low to moderate CEC of pedons may be due to the coarse texture, sandy nature of the parent material and low activity clay (Vasu et al., 2022). The significant positive relationship between CEC and clay content ( $r=0.887^{**}$ ) confirms the above fact. The exchangeable cations were in the order of Ca<sup>2+</sup> > Mg<sup>2+</sup> > Na<sup>+</sup> > K<sup>+</sup>. Similar observations were made by Mohekaret al. (2020) and Gangopadhyay et al. (2022). Exchangeable Ca<sup>2+</sup>, Mg<sup>2+</sup>, Na<sup>+</sup>, K<sup>+</sup> of study area varied from 17.06 to 52.46, 2.08 to 18.37, 1.50 to 7.59 and 0.11 to 2.19 cmol p<sup>+</sup> kg<sup>-1</sup>, respectively. In all the pedons, the exchangeable Ca<sup>2+</sup> generally declined irregularly with depth. In all pedons, the exchangeable Mg<sup>2+</sup> rises with soil depth; this phenomenon may be explained by Mg<sup>2+</sup> preferentially leaching to the lower horizon over Ca<sup>2+</sup>. The decline in the Ca/Mg ratio in these soils with depth was also indicative of it shows a substantial positive correlation ( $r= 0.734^*$ ) between exchangeable magnesium and pH.

Base saturation (BS) of study area varied from 82.11 to 105.08 per cent. BS in P<sub>5</sub>, P<sub>7</sub> and P<sub>10</sub> was varied from 87.47 to 99.56 %, BS of P<sub>9</sub> was varied from 93.63 to 95.43 and in pedon P<sub>1</sub> and P<sub>3</sub> from 87.16 to 101.30 per cent. In P<sub>4</sub> and P<sub>6</sub> base saturation ranging from 90.80 to 105.08 per cent whereas in P<sub>2</sub> and P<sub>8</sub> ranging from 82.11 to 102.00 per cent. The high base saturation of these soils is due to their occurrence in non-leaching environment of semi-arid tropics and less weathering. The base saturation in all pedons ranged from 82.11 to 105.08 per cent, which is more than 100% due to the presence of Ca-zeolites (Pal et al., 2006). The low to moderate BS of the pedons (P<sub>5</sub>, P<sub>7</sub>, P<sub>10</sub>) could be attributed to the pre-dominantly coarse soil texture as sandy loam and sandy clay loam were the common texture of the pedons (Vasu et al., 2022). The exchangeable sodium percentage (ESP) of study area (P<sub>1</sub> to P<sub>10</sub>) varied from 2.81 to 12.44 per cent and ESP of the all pedons of study area increased with depth whereas maximum ESP was found in subsurface horizons of pedon P<sub>1</sub> (Calcic Haplustepts) which might be ascribed to the formation of pedogenic carbonates leading to the development of sub-soil sodicity (Kalaiselvi et al. 2022). The semiarid climate is responsible for the pedogenetic processes, resulting in the depletion of Ca<sup>2+</sup> ions from the soil solution and the formation of CaCO<sub>3</sub> with the concomitant increase of ESP with pedon depth (Balpandeet al. 1996; Vaidya and Pal 2002). The prevailing semi-arid environment

leads to the depletion of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  ions in the soil solution in the form of calcretes and the concurrent increase in ESP with depth may be the cause of high  $\text{CaCO}_3$  in the soils (Balpande et al. 2007; Warhadeet al. 2022 and Vasundhara et al. 2022)

**Table 5 Correlation coefficient between physical and chemical properties**

|          | Depth   | HC       | Clay    | PAWC    | CEC   | Exch. Mg | Ca: Mg  | pH   |
|----------|---------|----------|---------|---------|-------|----------|---------|------|
| Depth    | 1.000   |          |         |         |       |          |         |      |
| HC       | -0.664* | 1.000    |         |         |       |          |         |      |
| Clay     | 0.787** | -0.369   | 1.000   |         |       |          |         |      |
| PAWC     | 0.981** | -0.627   | 0.789** | 1.000   |       |          |         |      |
| CEC      | 0.711** | -0.805** | 0.887** | 0.770** | 1.000 |          |         |      |
| Exch. Mg | 0.818** | -0.687*  | 0.688*  | 0.832** | 0.447 | 1.00     |         |      |
| Ca: Mg   | -0.566  | 0.334    | -0.322  | -0.600  | 0.158 | -0.823** | 1.000   |      |
| pH       | 0.776** | -0.486   | 0.458   | 0.744*  | 0.359 | 0.734*   | -0.697* | 1.00 |

Significant at 5%-\* (r=0.632) Significant at 1%-\*\* (r=0.762)

**Table 6 Soil classification of Jalna district of Maharashtra**

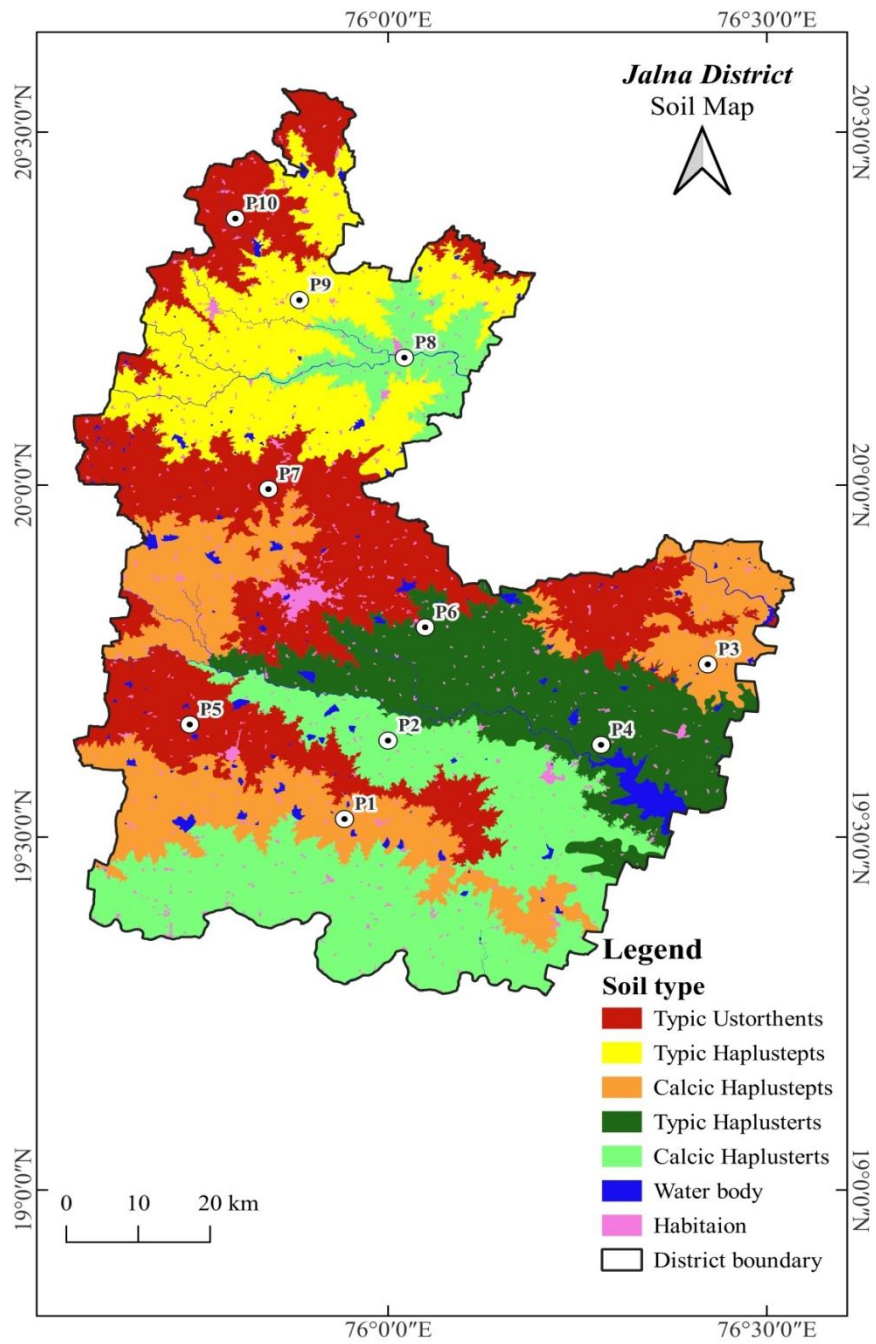
| Pedon No.       | Order       | Suborder | Great Group | Subgroup           | Family                                |
|-----------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| P <sub>1</sub>  | Inceptisols | Ustepts  | Haplustepts | Calcic Haplustepts | fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic      |
| P <sub>2</sub>  | Vertisols   | Usterts  | Haplusterts | Calcic Haplusterts | very fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic |
| P <sub>3</sub>  | Inceptisols | Ustepts  | Haplustepts | Calcic Haplustepts | fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic      |
| P <sub>4</sub>  | Vertisols   | Usterts  | Haplusterts | Typic Haplusterts  | fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic      |
| P <sub>5</sub>  | Entisols    | Orthents | Ustorthents | Typic Ustorthents  | fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic      |
| P <sub>6</sub>  | Vertisols   | Usterts  | Haplusterts | Typic Haplusterts  | fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic      |
| P <sub>7</sub>  | Entisols    | Orthents | Ustorthents | Typic Ustorthents  | fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic      |
| P <sub>8</sub>  | Vertisols   | Usterts  | Haplusterts | Calcic Haplusterts | very fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic |
| P <sub>9</sub>  | Inceptisols | Ustepts  | Haplustepts | Typic Haplustepts  | fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic      |
| P <sub>10</sub> | Entisols    | Orthents | Ustorthents | Typic Ustorthents  | fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic      |

### 3.5 Soil Classification

Based on morphological, physical, and physicochemical properties, the ten pedons of the Jalna district were classified according to Soil Taxonomy (Soil Survey Staff 2003). The dominant soils of the study area are typified under three orders viz. Entisols, Inceptisols and Vertisols. The soils (P<sub>5</sub>, P<sub>7</sub>, and P<sub>10</sub>) developed on gently to moderately sloping elevated area on hilly terrain were lack of diagnostic horizons in sub surface, presence of Ustic moisture regime, and because these soils do not key out for

another sub group the soils are classified as Typic Ustorthents. The order Inceptisols has been assigned to the pedons (P1, P3, and P9) that exhibit an ochric epipedon, followed by cambic subsurface diagnostic layers within 100 cm of the mineral soil surface and its lower limit at a depth of at least 25 cm below the mineral soil surface. Furthermore, these were classed as Ustepts at the sub-orders since the research region was approaching a ustic moisture regime. Due to the lack of other surface and subsurface diagnostic features, pedon (P9) was categorized as a Haplustept at the large group level. Additionally, at the subgroup level, the soils in this series reflect the fundamental idea of the Inceptisols soil order, which led them to Typic Haplustepts.

Conversely, the pedon soils (P1 and P3) were classified as Calcic Haplustepts because they had a calcic horizon within 100 cm of the mineral soil surface. The pedon (P<sub>2</sub>, P<sub>4</sub>, P<sub>6</sub> and P<sub>8</sub>) having more than 25 cm thick layer, within 100 cm of the mineral soil surface along with slickensides, wedge shaped peds that having long axes tilted 10 to 60 degrees from the horizontal and deep cracks that open and close periodically and contain more than 30 percent clay in the fine-earth fraction. Since, these soils were classified in order Vertisols. Pedon (P<sub>4</sub> and P<sub>6</sub>) classified at sub-group level pedon as Typic Haplusterts because these soils do not key out for another sub-group. Moreover Pedon (P<sub>2</sub> and P<sub>8</sub>) classified at sub-group level pedon as Calcic Haplusterts because these soils having calcic horizon within 150 cm of the mineral soil surface.



**Fig 2 Soil map of Jalna district of Maharashtra**

UNDER PEER REVIEW

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The present study highlighted significant variations in the morphological and physicochemical properties of soils in the Jalna district of the Marathwada region, Maharashtra. These properties varied with topographic positions, primarily due to differences in the degree of soil development under various topographic conditions. The soils ranged from very shallow to very deep, were slightly to strongly alkaline, and exhibited organic carbon levels ranging from very low to high. They were also slightly to strongly calcareous, with Exchangeable Sodium Percentage (ESP) varying from low to high. The exchangeable cations followed the order  $\text{Ca}^{2+} > \text{Mg}^{2+} > \text{Na}^+ > \text{K}^+$ . Nutrient availability decreased with increasing soil depth, alkalinity, and calcareousness. Factors such as soil depth, pH,  $\text{CaCO}_3$  content, and hydraulic conductivity were identified as major yield-limiting constraints. Taxonomically, the soils were classified into Entisols, Inceptisols, and Vertisols. At the family level, they were further categorized as: Fine, Smectitic, Isohyperthermic, Typic Ustorthents, Fine, Smectitic, Isohyperthermic, Typic Haplustepts, Fine, Smectitic, Isohyperthermic, Calcic Haplustepts, Fine, Smectitic, Isohyperthermic, Typic Haplusterts, Very Fine, Smectitic, Isohyperthermic, Calcic Haplusterts. These findings provide valuable insights for soil classification and management, aiding in the development of strategies to optimize land use and agricultural productivity.

Disclaimer (Artificial intelligence)

Option 1:

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