

Assessment of Local Knowledge and Practices on Soil Conservation of Farmers in Taungtha Township, Myingyan District, Mandalay Division, Myanmar

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Abstract

The objectives of the research were to explore the socio-economic characteristics of farmers, to investigate farming practices of farmers, to assess local knowledge and practices on soil conservation of farmers, and to identify problems faced by the local farmers for using soil conservation practices in Taungtha Township, Myingyan District, Mandalay Division, Myanmar.

The research was conducted in Taungtha township. It is one of the townships in Central Dry Zone, Myanmar. In this study, both primary and secondary data collection techniques were used. Structured-questionnaires were employed to interview 102 farmers and direct fields observations were the methods of research. The farmers were selected by using random sample methods.

Study findings revealed that most of the farmers had awareness about soil erosion and mentioned water erosion as main type. Results showed that the causes of soil erosion are high intensity of rainfall followed by steep slopes and damaged conservation structures. Farmers responded the consequences of soil erosion were declined crops productivity, loss of fertile soils, seeds and fertilizers. More than 50 % of the farmers had knowledge about crop rotation, cross-slope soil bund, stone bund, intercropping, cross-slope farming and fertilizer application. But only a small proportion of farmers had knowledge on residual management, farm yard manure, contour bund, mulching and cover cropping methods. For soil conservation practices, most of the farmers were conducted only crop rotation and cross-slope soil bund. A small percentage of farmers applied other rest of soil conservation practice, and no farmers applied cover cropping and mulching. One of the main problems for conducting soil conservation practices was that local farmers used weeds and crops residues as animal feed instead of using for soil conservation activities.

According to the needs assessment of farmers, most of them answered that they are interested to attend training on soil conservation. It was found that farmers wanted to be informed 1-3 days before holding trainings, and the way to invite was through the village chief. The training should be held two (2) times per year in the afternoon at the village. As the loan support assessment, farmers wanted about 200,000 kyat per acre. To improve the knowledge of farmers on soil conservation, agricultural extension department and other related organizations should provide information and educational materials and activities such as radio programs, leaflets, training courses and seminars for local farmers.