

Original Research Article

<https://doi.org/10.20546/ijcmas.2018.706.322>

## Soil Physical, Physico-Chemical Properties of Mulugu Division Soils of Warangal District, India

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### ABSTRACT

#### Keywords

Soil physical,  
Physico-chemical,  
Nutrient status,  
Classification and  
Pedons

#### Article Info

Accepted:  
20 May 2018  
Available Online:  
10 June 2018

Six typical pedons from mulugu division of warangal district were studied for physical, physico-chemical and chemical properties of the area. The soils were moderately deep to very deep, very dark brown to strong brown in colour, gravelly sand to clay in texture and had varied structure including single grain, granular, sub-angular blocky and angular blocky. The clay content in soils varied from 1.4 to 67 per cent. The clay content increased with depth in all pedons. Silt fraction in the soils 6.7 to 32.6 per cent. The sand content in the soils under investigation varied from 8.2 to 80.6 per cent. Most of the pedons exhibited more or less an increasing trend in bulk density with depth. These soils were near slightly acidic to moderately strong alkaline in reaction, non-saline and very low to medium in organic carbon. The CEC varied from 3.9 to 59.4 c mol (p<sup>+</sup>) kg<sup>-1</sup> soil and dominated by Ca<sup>+2</sup> followed by Mg<sup>+2</sup>, Na<sup>+</sup> and K<sup>+</sup>. The soils were very low to medium in available nitrogen, low to medium in available phosphorus and potassium. Available zinc was deficient to sufficient in all the horizon. The soils were deficient in available iron, copper and manganese. The soils were classified as Typic Haplustepts, Typic Haplustalfs, Typic Haplusterts, Lithic Haplustalfs, Typic Haplusterts and Vertic Haplustept.

### Introduction

In the recent past, productivity of agricultural soils worldwide in general is on the decline, which prompted the per capita availability of food grain to fall from 510 g per day in 1991 to 463 g per day in 2004. These declining trends across the world can be attributed to ever growing population, raising incomes of populous Asian nations and discovery of new uses such as bio-fuels, besides weather based

abnormalities owing to climate change (Sidhu and Vatta, 2008). Under these circumstances, ensuring self sufficiency and food security are challenging tasks before the populous nations like India. Soil characterization determines the soil's individual inherent potentials and constraints for crop production besides giving detailed information about the different soil properties. Characterization and systematic classification of dominant soil groups is an essential tool and a pre-requisite for soil

fertility evaluation and efficient soil-fertilizer-water management practices and thus, crop management. The newly formed Telangana state has variable types of soils. Any progress and development in agriculture depends largely on soil resources. Maintaining soil in the state of high productivity on sustainable basis is an important for meeting basic needs of the people. Systematic study of soils is important for scientific utilization of these soils and land resources.

### **Materials and Methods**

The pedons from the study area in Mulugu division of warangal district, lies in Central Telangana Zone in Telangana state which lies between 17° 33' and 18° 14' North latitude and 79° 23' and 79° 59' East longitude. The study area is characterised by semi arid climatic condition, with the average rainfall of 803.2 mm (decennial average of 2004-13) of which 90.11 per cent is received during southwest monsoon, 4.80 per cent during northeast monsoon and 5.08 per cent during summer season. Mean monthly rainfall is highest in the month of July month (214.4 mm) followed by September (177.5 mm), August (164.1 mm) months.

Annual mean maximum and minimum temperatures of the district are 32.44 °C and 23.31°C respectively. The maximum and minimum mean monthly temperature ranges from 17.0°C to 40.8°C. The mean minimum temperature is recorded during December (17.0°C) and maximum in May (40.8°C). Mean annual air temperature of the district is 27.78 °C. Therefore, the temperature regime of the study area was classified as isohyperthermic. Natural vegetation comprises of *Ficus* spp, Tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*), neem (*Azadirachta indica*), *Prosopis* and ber (*Zizyphus jujube*) are predominated trees in the study area.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Soil morphology**

The soil morphological description of the study area will be presented in the table 2. The depth of different pedons of study area of mulugu division of Warangal district varied from 12 to 160 cm and found to have moderately shallow to very deep solum. The highest depth of pedon was observed in the horizon BSS<sub>3</sub> of pedon 2. While the lowest depth and pedon was found to be horizon of AP of pedon 4. Nasre *et al.*, (2013) noticed that soil depth is related to slope and degree of soil erosion. It was noticed that, soils developed on plateau top, escarpments, isolated hillocks and foot slopes were shallow and soils developed on undulating lands, alluvial plains and valleys were deep.

The colour of the soil pedons of the study area were varied from strong brown to gray colour. Whereas hue in the range of 2.5 YR 5 YR, 7.5 YR and 10 YR, value of 3 to 6 and chroma in the range of 1 to 6 respectively. Occurrence of iron oxides at various hydrated forms might have resulted in dark brown colour to the soils (Ramprakash and Seshagiri Rao, 2002).

The texture of the pedons of study area was varied from gravelly sand to clay. Whereas in the pedons 1, 2 and 5 the texture was clay throughout depth of the profile. However, significant increase in the clay content with increasing depth of the profile was noticed in the pedons 11. In case of pedon 2, the clay content increased with depth up to three horizons and later on it decreased. In pedons 3 the texture was clay loam throughout the depth of the profile but the clay content increased with increasing depth of the profile. In case of pedons 4 and 6 the finer fractions of the increased significantly with the depth of the soil mainly due to eluviation and illuviation processes operated in the pedons.

This resulted in the formation of a distinct argillic horizon in the subsurface horizons. Sand content in the soil decreased with increasing depth in these pedons. These variations were caused by topographic position, difference in the nature of parent material, *in-situ* weathering and translocation of clay and age of soils. The variations in texture of soils were mainly associated with the differences in composition of parent material and topography (Nayak *et al.* 2002 and Sitanggang *et al.* 2006). The structure of the soil pedons size of aggregate was medium to coarse, grade was weak to medium, the type of aggregate was sub-angular blocky to angular blocky structure. The blocky structures *i.e.*, sub-angular and angular blocky were attributed to the presence of higher quantities of clay fractions. Similar observations were reported by Meena *et al.* (2012) in Malwa plateau of Banswara district in Rajasthan.

The consistence of the soil pedons of mulugu division pedons 1 to 6 varied from slightly hard to hard, loose to very firm and nonsticky to non plastic and very sticky to very plastic under dry, moist and wet conditions respectively. Whereas in pedons 1, 2, 3 and 5 the consistency was very sticky to very plastic in most of the horizons indicating the predominance of higher content of high active clays. Presence of loose, friable and non-sticky and non-plastic or slightly sticky and slightly plastic consistency might be due to negligible or very small amount of expanding clay minerals. Satyavathi and Suryanarayana Reddy (2004) reported similar consistency in soils of Telangana at different soil moisture limits. Whereas in the pedon 4 and 6 were non sticky to non plastic and slightly sticky to slightly plastic in dry, moist and wet condition respectively. Sticky and plastic to very sticky and very plastic, firm to very firm and slightly hard to very hard consistence in wet, moist and dry conditions, respectively might be due

to high clay content of the soils. Similar observations were also made by Leelavathi *et al.* (2009) in soils of Yerpedu mandal of Chittoor district in Andhra Pradesh.

### **Soil physical properties**

The detailed Physical properties of the study area of Mulugu division of Warangal district presented in table 3. The sand percentage of the pedons varied from 8.2 to 80.6 per cent. The highest sand percentage was found in pedon 6 (80.6 per cent) horizon of (AP) where as the lowest sand percentage was observed in pedon 5 (15.2 per cent) horizon of (BW2). Higher sand content in these surface soils could be attributed loss of finer fractions of soils due to erosion, movement of clay to deeper horizons due illuviation and more active chemical weathering in the lower horizons due to better availability of moisture. Similar findings were also reported by Basavaraju *et al.* (2005).

The silt content varied from 6.7 to 32.6 per cent. The highest silt percentage was observed in pedon 2 of BSS3 and lowest percentage of silt was observed in the pedon 6. This might be due to variation in weathering of parent material or *in situ* formation. These results were in agreement with the findings of Satish Kumar and Naidu (2012a).

The clay content varied from 1.4 to 67.0 per cent. The highest the clay percent was recorded in the pedon 5 horizon of BSS3 (67.0 per cent) and lowest clay percentage was recorded in the pedon 4 of the AP horizon (1.4 percent). Increase in clay content with depth might be due to more intensive chemical weathering at deeper layer and eluviation of finer particles from surface horizon leaving behind coarse particles in surface layers. The enrichment of clay in Bw and Bss horizons of pedons 1, 2, 3 and 5 was primarily due to *in situ* weathering of parent material. Satish

Kumar and Naidu (2012a) in soils of Vadamalapeta mandal of Chittoor district. The increase in clay content in the Bt horizon in the pedons 4 and 6 is mainly due to illuviation of the clay from the upper horizons. Similar enrichment Bt horizons with the clay content was reported by Ramprakash and Rao (2002) in Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh. The bulk density of different pedons varied from 1.38 to 1.78 Mg m<sup>-3</sup>. The higher bulk density values in some pedons may be due to high clay content resulting in greater compaction in swelling clay soils. Similar results were reported by Ashokkumar and Jagdish Prasad (2010) who reported higher bulk density values in the soils of Ahmadnagar district of Maharashtra. The particle density of different pedons varied from 2.55 to 2.65 Mg m<sup>-3</sup>. Not much variation in the particle density was recorded among different pedons. No regular increasing or decreasing trend was recorded in particle density in any of the pedons studies in the Warangal district. The saturated hydraulic conductivity was ranged from 0.1 to 14.65 cm hr<sup>-1</sup>. The highest hydraulic conductivity was recorded in the pedon 6 horizon of AP and lowest value of hydraulic conductivity. In all the pedons hydraulic conductivity decreased with increasing depth of the soil. Similar results were earlier reported by Ramprakash and Seshagiri Rao (2002) in Vertisols and Alfisols of Krishna district. Increasing compaction of soil with the depth resulting increasing bulk density, decreasing pore density might have resulted in reduction of the hydraulic conductivity with depth in all the studies pedons. Available water content in the study area ranged from 2.8 to 19.4 per cent. The highest AWC was observed in BSS3 horizon of pedon 5. While the lowest value of Available water content was observed in AP horizon of pedon 4. These differences in water holding capacity were due to variation in the depth, clay, silt and organic carbon content of the pedons. These results match with those of Thangasamy *et al.* (2005) in soils of Sivagiri

micro-watershed in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh.

### **Soil physico-chemical properties**

The detailed Physico-chemical properties of the study area of Mulugu division of Warangal district presented in table 4. The soil reaction of the study area was ranged from 6.3 to 8.9 *i.e.*, slightly acidic to strongly alkaline in reaction. The highest value of pH was observed in pedon 2 of BSS2 horizon and while the lowest pH was found in pedon 4 horizon of Bt1 horizon. The near neutral to very strongly alkaline pH may be attributed to the reaction of applied fertilizer material with soil colloids, which resulted in the retention of basic cations on the exchange complex of the soil. Similar results were also reported by Sharma *et al.* (2011).

The electrical conductivity ranged from 0.14 to 1.15 dSm<sup>-1</sup>. The highest value of 1.15 dSm<sup>-1</sup> was recorded in BSS2 horizon of pedon 5 and the lowest electrical conductivity was observed in horizon of Bt1 of pedon 6 indicating non-saline in nature. The results in the present study indicate the non-saline nature of soils. The lower electrical conductivity in soils was due to excess leaching of salts and due to free drainage conditions which favoured the removal of released bases by percolating and drainage water. Similar results were observed by Ramprasad *et al.* (2013).

The organic carbon content in study area was found to be very low to medium and ranged from 0.19 to 0.82 per cent. The highest Organic carbon content was recorded in AP horizon of pedon 5 and where as the lowest Organic carbon content was recorded in AP horizon of pedon 3. Organic carbon content in all the pedons showed a decreasing trend with depth. Almost all the pedons showed a decreasing trend in organic carbon with depth,

which may be due to the fact that the surface horizons showed more organic matter content than sub-surface horizons due to the addition of plant residues and farm yard manure to surface horizons which resulted in higher organic carbon content in surface horizons than in the lower horizons. This observation was in accordance with results of Basavaraju *et al.*, (2005) in soils of Chandragiri mandal in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh.

The CaCO<sub>3</sub> content in soil under study area ranged from 1.2 to 12.1 per cent. The highest value of CaCO<sub>3</sub> content was observed in the BW3 horizon of pedon 3 and where as the lowest value of CaCO<sub>3</sub> content was found in the horizon of BW2 pedon1. Higher contents of CaCO<sub>3</sub> observed in the lower horizons of most of the pedons might be due to high clay content which led to impeded leaching, consequently accumulation of CaCO<sub>3</sub> in the lower horizons. Similar results were reported

by Ramprakash and Seshagiri Rao (2002) in soils of Krishna district, Andhra Pradesh.

The CEC value of in the study area ranged from 3.9 to 59.4 C mol (p+) Kg<sup>-1</sup> of soil. The highest CEC was observed in the horizon of BSS<sub>3</sub> of pedon 5 and while the lowest CEC was found in the horizon of AP horizon of pedon 6. The higher CEC values observed throughout the soil depth in the pedons 5 was due to illuvial accumulation of clay and also because of dominance of smectite clay mineral. These findings were amply supported by the observations of Satish Kumar and Naidu (2012) and Leelavathi *et al.*, (2010). Relatively low CEC is the reflection of parent material and higher degree of weathering leading to depletion of bases. Further, it may be due to dominance of clay minerals with low CEC especially illite and kaolinite. Similar findings were observed by Patil and Jagdish Prasad (2004) and Gangopadhyay *et al.* (2001)

**Table.1** Landscape characteristics of pedons

Pedon	Location	Elevation above mean sea level (m)	Physiography	Slope (%)	Drainage	Parent material
1	Venkatapur	18 <sup>0</sup> 14'16.59"N 79 <sup>0</sup> 59'12.91"E	Valley	0-1 very slightly eroded	Moderately well drained	Sand stone
2	Mulugu	17 <sup>0</sup> 33'34.60"N 79 <sup>0</sup> 46'04.06"E	Very gently sloping pediplain	1-2	Poorly drained	Weathered basalt
3	Ghanpur	17 <sup>0</sup> 51'19.27"N 79 <sup>0</sup> 23'06.19"E	Very gently broad valley	0-3 Moderately eroded	Important drainage	Alluvium Calluvium of lime stone
4	Chityal	17 <sup>0</sup> 32'37.27"N 79 <sup>0</sup> 37'02.25"E	Gently sloping	1-3 Moderately eroded	Moderately well drained	Granite gneiss
5	Regonda	18 <sup>0</sup> 14'14.72"N 79 <sup>0</sup> 46'04.06"E	Gently sloping	0-05 Slightly eroded	Poorly drained	Weathered lime stone
6	Atmakur (Wgl)	18 <sup>0</sup> 00'57.12"N 79 <sup>0</sup> 36'10.72"E	Slightly evoded pediplain	<1 Slightly eroded	Poorly drained	Weathered lime stone

**Table.2** Soil morphological description of Mulugu division of Warangal district in Telangana State

Horizon	Depth (cm)	Soil colour	Texture	Structure			Consistence			Efferve-scence	Boundary		Concretions CaCO <sub>3</sub>	
		Moist		S	G	T	Dry	Moist	Wet		D	T	Q	S
<b>Pedon 1</b>														
Ap	0-22	10.0YR 6/2	sl	m	2	sbk	sh	fr	sopo	eo	c	s	-	-
Bw1	22-55	7.5YR 5/8	gscl	m	2	sbk	sh	fr	ssps	eo	c	s	-	-
Bw2	55-87	7.5YR 5/8	gscl	m	2	sbk	sh	fr	ssps	eo	c	s	f	f
Cr	87+	7.5YR 5/8	Weathered Parent Material											
<b>Pedon 2</b>														
Ap	0-26	10.0YR 3/2	c	c	2	sbk	h	fi	ssps	e	c	s	f	f
Bw	26-51	10.0YR 3/2	c	m	2	sbk	h	fi	sssp	e	c	s	c	f
Bss1	51-86	10.0YR 3/2	c	m	2	sbk	sh	fi	sp	es	g	w	c	f
Bss2	86-125	10.0YR 3/2	gc	m	2	abk	sh	fi	sp	es	g	s	c	f
Bss3	125-160	10.0YR 5/4	gc	m	2	abk	sh	fi	sp	es	-	-	m	f
<b>Pedon 3</b>														
Ap	0-22	10.0YR 4/2	cl	c	2	sbk	-	fr	sp	e	g	s	f	f
Bw1	22-45	10.0YR 3/3	cl	m	2	sbk	-	fi	sp	e	g	s	f	f
Bw2	45-72	10.0YR 3/2	cl	m	2	sbk	-	fi	sp	ev	g	s	c	f
Bw3	72-118	10.0YR 3/3	cl	m	2	sbk	-	fi	sp	ev	g	s	c	f
Bw4	118-150	10.0YR 3/3	cl	m	2	sbk	-	fi	sp	e	-	-	f	f
<b>Pedon 4</b>														
Ap	0-12	5.0YR 5/4	gsl	m	1	sbk	-	fr	sopo	eo	c	s	-	-
Bt1	12-28	2.5YR 3/2	gsc	m	1	sbk	-	fr	sps	eo	g	S	-	-
Bt2	28-42	2.5YR 3/4	gc	m	1	sbk	-	fr	sp	eo	c	s	-	-
Cr	42+	Weathered Parent Material												
<b>Pedon 5</b>														
Ap	0-25	10.0YR 4/1	gc	m	2	sbk	h	fi	vsvp	es	c	s	m	f
Bw1	25-57	10.0YR 3/2	gc	m	3	sbk	vh	vfi	vsvp	es	c	s	m	f
Bss1	57-96	10.0YR 4/1	gc	c	3	abk	vh	vfi	vsvp	es	c	s	c	f
Bss2	96-120	10.0YR 4/1	gc	c	3	abk	exh	efi	vsvp	es	g	s	m	f
Bss3	120-155	10.0YR 3/3	gc	c	3	abk	eh	efi	vsvp	es	-	-	m	f
<b>Pedon 6</b>														
Ap	0-16	7.5YR 4/3	gls	m	1	sbk	-	fr	sp	eo	c	s	-	-
Bt1	16-32	2.5YR 5/4	gscl	m	2	sbk	-	fr	sp	eo	c	S	-	-
Bt2	32-58	2.5YR 3/6	gscl	m	2	sbk	-	fr	sp	eo	c	s	-	-
BC	58-102	2.5YR 5/6	gscl	m	2	sbk	-	fr	sp	eo	c	s	-	-
Cr	102-117	Weathered Parent Material												

**Table.3** Soil physical properties of Mulugu division of Warangal district in Telangana State

Pedon No. & Horizon	Depth (cm)	Sand (%) (0.2-0.05 mm)	Silt (%) (0.5 mm)	Clay (%) (< 0.002 mm)	Bulk density (Mg m <sup>-3</sup> )	Particle density (Mg m <sup>-3</sup> )	Hydraulic Conductivity (cm hr <sup>-1</sup> )	Water retention		Available Water Content (%)
								33 Kpa	1500 Kpa	
<b>P1</b>										
Ap	0-22	70.5	11.5	18	1.41	2.65	8.8	10.6	6.1	4.5
Bw1	22-55	65	14.5	20.5	1.46	2.6	6.5	11.9	7.1	4.8
Bw2	55-87	62.8	14.6	22.6	1.46	2.65	6.4	15.9	8.6	7.3
Cr	87+	Weathered Parent Material								
<b>P2</b>										
Ap	0-26	35.5	7.5	56	1.65	2.65	1.4	31.8	20.8	11
Bw	26-51	29.5	15.5	55	1.68	2.61	1.1	30.6	19.4	11.2
Bss1	51-86	25.5	16.5	58	1.71	2.63	0.65	31.5	22.1	9.4
Bss2	86-125	23.7	26.8	49.5	1.77	2.62	0.38	28.6	19.4	9.2
Bss3	125-160	19.3	32.6	48.1	1.77	2.65	0.21	28.1	18.1	10
<b>P3</b>										
Ap	0-22	42.3	23.5	34.2	1.41	2.65	4.21	22.1	13	9.1
Bw1	22-45	43.7	19.7	36.6	1.41	2.64	3.21	23.2	13.8	9.4
Bw2	45-72	41.9	20.7	37.4	1.52	2.59	2.84	23.2	14.1	9.1
Bw3	72-118	39.7	17.8	42.5	1.56	2.65	2.1	26.2	16.2	10
Bw4	118-150	41.2	15.7	43.1	1.62	2.6	1.9	27.8	17	10.8
<b>P4</b>										
Ap	0-12	78.7	10.9	10.4	1.45	2.63	12.5	6.1	3.3	2.8
Bt1	12-28	55.5	12.7	31.8	1.48	2.62	7.45	14.3	9.6	4.7
Bt2	28-42	42.9	13.8	43.3	1.59	2.65	4.65	19.8	13	6.8
Cr	42+	Weathered Parent Material								
<b>P5</b>										
Ap	0-25	9.5	29.3	61.2	1.56	2.63	1.21	33.8	22.7	11.1
Bw1	25-57	8.9	26.9	64.2	1.61	2.57	1.02	38.9	23.5	15.4
Bss1	57-96	8.7	26.7	64.6	1.62	2.65	0.65	40.1	23.8	16.3
Bss2	96-120	8.5	25.9	65.6	1.62	2.55	0.31	43.2	24.3	18.9
Bss3	120-155	8.2	24.8	67	1.78	2.65	0.1	44.5	25.1	19.4
<b>P6</b>										
Ap	0-16	80.6	8.3	11.1	1.39	2.65	14.65	6.5	3.3	3.2
Bt1	16-32	63.7	7.9	28.4	1.38	2.56	10.2	14.8	8.4	6.4
Bt2	32-58	54.8	6.7	38.5	1.48	2.63	8.8	19.6	11.4	8.2
BC	58-102	68.7	7.5	23.8	1.52	2.58	5.6	15.2	7.1	8.1
Cr	102-117	Weathered Parent Material								

**Table.4** Soil physico- chemical properties of Mulugu division of Warangal district in Telangana State

Pedon No. & Horizon	Depth (cm)	pH (1:2.5)	EC (dS m <sup>-1</sup> )	Organic carbon g kg <sup>-1</sup>	CaCO <sub>3</sub> (%)	CEC [c mol (p+) kg <sup>-1</sup> ]	Exchangeable bases [c mol (p+)kg <sup>-1</sup> ]				Base Saturation (%)
							Ca <sup>2+</sup>	Mg <sup>2+</sup>	Na <sup>+</sup>	K <sup>+</sup>	
<b>Pedon 1</b>											
Ap	0-22	7.3	0.18	0.59	-	13.2	8.9	3.9	0	0.3	99.24
Bw1	22-55	7.4	0.28	0.32	-	14.2	9.8	3.8	0.1	0.4	99.3
Bw2	55-87	7.7	0.35	0.26	1.2	15.4	10.8	3.9	0.1	0.4	98.7
Cr	87+	Weathered Parent Material									
<b>Pedon 2</b>											
Ap	0-26	7.9	0.23	0.6	2.8	36.5	24.2	11.7	0	0.6	100
Bw	26-51	8.1	0.25	0.51	3.7	34.2	22.6	11.2	0.1	0.3	100
Bss1	51-86	8.2	0.29	0.35	8.5	33.6	21.6	11.3	0.4	0.3	100
Bss2	86-125	8.9	0.42	0.26	8.8	31.9	20.2	11	0.5	0.2	100
Bss3	125-160	8.8	0.58	0.26	9.6	30.5	19.5	10.3	0.5	0.2	100
<b>Pedon 3</b>											
Ap	0-22	7.8	0.15	0.76	1.6	20.5	13.5	6.2	0.4	0.4	100
Bw1	22-45	7.9	0.35	0.44	1.8	21.6	14.2	6.7	0.4	0.3	100
Bw2	45-72	8.1	0.32	0.38	12	23.1	16.4	6.2	0.3	0.2	100
Bw3	72-118	8.3	0.29	0.26	12.1	24.8	17.8	6.3	0.5	0.2	100
Bw4	118-150	7.9	0.25	0.19	11	26.4	18.9	6.7	0.6	0.2	100
<b>Pedon 4</b>											
Ap	0-12	6.5	0.15	0.38	-	6.1	2.5	1.1	0	0.2	62.3
Bt1	12-28	6.3	0.16	0.52	-	16.2	7.8	3.1	0	0.1	67.9
Bt2	28-42	6.8	0.18	0.58	-	20.1	10.6	4.2	0.1	0.1	74.63
Cr	42+	Weathered Parent Material									
<b>Pedon 5</b>											
Ap	0-25	7.9	0.39	0.82	7.7	51.8	32.1	17.8	1.3	0.6	100
Bw1	25-57	8.2	0.47	0.54	7.5	53.2	28.8	21.5	2.4	0.5	100
Bss1	57-96	8.2	0.55	0.36	7	55.7	26.4	24.4	4.5	0.4	100
Bss2	96-120	8.3	1.15	0.25	7.4	56.9	24.8	22.8	8.9	0.4	100
Bss3	120-155	8.4	1.09	0.24	7.8	59.4	23.1	25.6	10.5	0.2	100
<b>Pedon 6</b>											
Ap	0-16	7.2	0.15	0.32	-	3.9	1.6	0.6	0	0.1	59.49
Bt1	16-32	6.6	0.14	0.58	-	11.6	5.6	1.9	0	0.1	65.6
Bt2	32-58	6.7	0.19	0.42	-	14	6.8	2.4	0.1	0.2	68
BC	58-102	6.9	0.16	0.28	-	12.8	8.4	3.1	0.2	0.3	93.75
Cr	102+	Weathered Parent Material									

**Table.6** Available major nutrients (kg ha<sup>-1</sup>) and micronutrient status (mg kg<sup>-1</sup>) of Mulugu division soils of Warangal district

Pedon No. & Horizon	Depth (cm)	Available macronutrients			Available micronutrients			
		N	P	K	Zn	Cu	Fe	Mn
		kg ha <sup>-1</sup>			mg kg <sup>-1</sup>			
<b>Pedon 1</b>								
Ap	0-22	270	18.5	350	0.48	0.79	12.5	25.2
Bw1	22-55	189	11.5	285	0.39	0.68	9.6	16.5
Bw2	55-87	162	9.5	215	0.22	0.46	9.4	15.2
Cr	87+	Weathered Parent Material						
<b>Pedon 2</b>								
Ap	0-26	285	22.5	320	0.56	0.9	8.8	10.06
Bw	26-51	175	19.5	280	0.49	0.86	6.8	9.2
Bss1	51-86	164	17.5	250	0.38	0.82	4.2	8.4
Bss2	86-125	155	18.5	192	0.41	0.72	6.6	8.2
Bss3	125-160	145	17.5	165	0.32	0.63	5.5	7.9
<b>Pedon 3</b>								
Ap	0-22	245	23.5	360	0.56	0.88	8.8	10.6
Bw1	22-45	178	16.5	325	0.49	0.68	6.8	9.2
Bw2	45-72	185	13.5	295	0.38	0.45	4.2	8.4
Bw3	72-118	262	10.5	264	0.41	0.66	6.6	8.2
Bw4	118-150	195	17.5	250	0.32	0.58	5.8	7.9
<b>Pedon 4</b>								
Ap	0-12	296	19.5	345	0.44	0.72	3.2	9.5
Bt1	12-28	265	16.1	315	0.36	0.56	4.6	6.5
Bt2	28-42	185	14.1	295	0.35	0.42	6.2	9.2
Cr	42+	Weathered Parent Material						
<b>Pedon 5</b>								
Ap	0-25	274	15.5	356	0.41	0.48	7.6	15.2
Bw1	25-57	185	12.5	296	0.39	0.42	6.6	12.6
Bss1	57-96	165	10.5	185	0.24	0.22	5.2	10.3
Bss2	96-120	155	4.5	176	0.19	0.19	4.6	10.2
Bss3	120-155	140	5.5	156	0.19	0.18	5	11.2
<b>Pedon 6</b>								
Ap	0-16	295	19.5	345	1.29	3.9	10.9	10.23
Bt1	16-32	255	9.5	285	1.1	2.15	10.21	10.23
Bt2	32-58	185	7.6	195	0.7	1.65	7.65	9.87
BC	58-102	165	6.5	175	0.34	1.55	6.65	6.91
Cr	102-117	Weathered Parent Material						

**Table.5** Soil classification of the study area

Pedon No.	Order	Sub-order	Great group	Sub-group	Family	Tentative soil series
1	Inceptisols	Ustepts	Haplustepts	Typic Haplustept	Loamy-skeletal, mixed, isohyperthermic Typic Haplustept	Venkatapur
2	Vertisol	Usterts	Haplusterts	Typic Haplusterts	Fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic, Typic Haplusterts	Mulugu
3	Inceptisols	Vertic	Haplustepts	Vertic Haplustept	Fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic Vertic Haplustept	Ghanpur
4	Alfisols	Ustalfs	Haplustalfs	Lithic Haplustalfs	Loamy-skeletal, mixed, isohyperthermic Lithic Haplustalfs	Chityal
5	Vertisols	Usterts	Haplusterts	Typic Haplusterts	Very fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic Typic Haplusterts	Regonda
6	Alfisols	Ustalfs	Haplustalfs	Typic Haplustalfs	Loamy-skeletal, mixed, isohyperthermic, Typic Haplustalfs	Malyal

The exchangeable bases in all the pedons found to be in the order of  $Ca^{2+} > Mg^{2+} > Na^+ > K^+$  on the exchangeable complex. The percent base saturation on the exchange complex of soil under investigated area varied from 59.49 to 100 per cent. Comparatively exchangeable bases in the present study were more or less in the order of Vertisols > Inceptisols > Alfisols. The basic cations content was low in Entisols which might be due to less clay and high silica content. Similar observations were earlier made by Sarkar *et al.* (2001) and Arun Kumar *et al.* (2002). Relatively higher exchangeable Ca was observed in surface horizons of some pedons which might be due to redistribution of  $Ca^{2+}$  by the vegetation. These observations were in agreement with the findings of Patil and Jagdish Prasad (2004).

### Soil classification

The detailed classification of the study area of Mulugu division of Warangal district

presented in table 5. Based on morphological, physical, physico-chemical, mineralogical and meteorological data, the soils in the study area of Mulugu division of Warangal district were classified as Alfisols, Inceptisols and Vertisols.

Following features in the sub-surface horizons within a depth of 69 to 160 cm in pedon 1 (with a thickness of >15 cm) were observed. Did not have anthropic, histic, melanic, mollic, plaggen and umbric epipedons. Absence of duripan, fragipan, argillic, calcic, gypsic, natric, oxic, petro-calcic, petro-gypsic, placic and spodic sub-surface horizons. The pedons did not exhibit intergradation with other taxa or an extrgradation from the central concept. Hence, pedons 1 was logically classified as Loamy-skeletal, mixed, isohyperthermic Typic Haplustept Typic Haplustepts at sub-group level. Niranjana *et al.* (2011) classified banana growing soils in Pulivendla region of Andhra Pradesh as Typic Haplustepts at sub-group level.

The pedon 2 had shown the following characteristics, Cracks that are opened and closed periodically, Intersecting slicken-sides and / or wedge shaped aggregates and pressure faces, More than 30 per cent clay (weighted mean) in the fine earth fraction of all the horizons, Absence of lithic contact within 100 cm of the mineral soil surface, Absence of calcic, halic, salic and sodic horizons. Hence, pedons were classified as Fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic, Typic Haplusterts at sub-group level. Ramprakash and Seshagiri Rao (2002) and Ramprakash (2005), taxonomically classified some soils of Krishna district in Andhra Pradesh, Soils of Ramannagudem watershed in Nalgonda district.

Pedon 3 had shown cracks within 125 cm of the mineral soil surface that are 5 mm or more wide through a thickness of 30 cm or more for some time in normal years and slicken-sides or wedge shaped aggregates in a layer 15 cm or more thick that has its upper within 125 cm of the mineral soil surface were classified as Fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic, Vertic Haplustept. The presence of cambic sub-surface diagnostic horizon (Bw) in these pedon was recognized by the above features. Jagdish Prasad *et al.* (2001) reported that presence of cambic sub-surface horizon was the diagnostic criteria for Inceptisols.

Pedon 4 was showed the absence of characteristics of aqualfs, cryalfs, xeralfs and Udalfs, and, all the pedons had Ustic soil moisture regime and presence of lithic contact at < 50 cm depth (42 cm) was keyed as Loamy-skeletal, mixed, isohyperthermic Lithic Haplustalfs. Absence of lithic contact within 100 cm of the mineral soil surface and Absence of calcic, halic, salic and sodic horizons hence, these pedon 5 were qualified to be placed under Very Fine, smectitic, isohyperthermic, Typic Haplusterts. Ramprakash and Seshagiri Rao (2002) and

Ramprakash (2005) taxonomically classified some soils of Krishna district in Andhra Pradesh,

Presence of argillic horizon, base saturation of more than 50 per cent in all the sub-surface layers due to the absence of Lithic contact, cracks with in 125 cm, lack of COLE value of more than 6.0, frigid temperatures, mesic or thermic soil temperatures, vertic properties, aquic conditions, saturation of water in any of the horizons for more than 20 days, pumice or pumice like fragments, entire lamille forms, 75 per cent sand in the 75 cm argillic layer, calcic layer in the 100 cm depth of the pedon 6 was classified as Fine-loamy, mixed, isohyperthermic, Typic Haplustalfs. Satyavathi and Suryanarayana Reddy (2004) and Ramprasad and Goverdhan (2011) classified the Alfisols of Telngana under Typic haplustalfs.

### **Soil nutrient status**

#### **Macronutrient status**

The nutrient status of the study area was presented in table 6. The available nitrogen in the soils under present investigation ranged from 142 to 296 kg/ha. The lowest value of 142 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> soil was observed in BSS3 horizon of pedon 5. The highest value of 296 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> soil was noticed in AP horizon of pedon 4. The available nitrogen was found to be maximum in the surface horizons and decreased more or less with depth of the pedons, which might be due to decreasing trend of organic carbon with depth. This observation was in agreement with the results of Sarkar *et al.* (2002) and Satish Kumar and Naidu (2012).

The available phosphorus in soils of the study area varied from 4.5 to 23.5 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> soil. The lowest value of 4.5 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> soil was observed in BSS2 horizon of pedon 5. The highest

value of 23.5 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> soil was noticed in AP horizon of pedon 3. In general, higher available phosphorus was observed in the surface horizons and decreased regularly with depth. The reason for high available phosphorus in surface horizons might possibly be due to the confinement of crop cultivation to the rhizosphere which improves the organic carbon content in surface and supplementing the depleted phosphorus by external sources *i.e.*, fertilizers and presence of small amounts of free iron oxide and exchangeable Al<sup>3+</sup> in the surface horizons (Thangasamy *et al.* 2005). The available potassium in soils of the study area ranged from 156 to 360 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> soil. The lowest value of 156 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> soil was observed in BSS3 horizon of pedon 5 and the highest value of 360 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> soil was noticed in AP horizon of pedon 3. Most of the pedons exhibited more or less a decreasing trend with depth.

Slow weathering and fixation of released potassium might have resulted in low exchangeable potassium status (Ramprakash and Seshagiri Rao, 2002). Amount and type of clay, organic carbon, soil pH and CEC significantly affects the K-availability in the soil. Similar observations were also noticed by Sharma and Anil Kumar (2003) a significant and positive correlation between clay content and available K as K availability was largely controlled by clay minerals.

### **Micro nutrients**

The available zinc was ranged for 0.22 to 1.29 mg kg<sup>-1</sup> soil. The lowest value of 0.22 mg kg<sup>-1</sup> soil was noticed in BW2 horizon of pedon 1 and the highest value of 1.29 mg kg<sup>-1</sup> of soil was recorded in AP horizon of pedon 6. The available copper in soils under study area ranged from 0.18 to 3.90 mg kg<sup>-1</sup> soil. The lowest value of 0.18 mg kg<sup>-1</sup> soil was observed in BSS3 horizon of pedon 5 and the highest value of 3.90 mg kg<sup>-1</sup> of soil was

noticed in AP horizon pedon 6. The available iron ranged from 3.22 to 12.5 mg kg<sup>-1</sup> soil. The lowest value of 3.22 mg kg<sup>-1</sup> soil was recorded in AP horizon of pedon 4 and where as the highest value 12.5 mg kg<sup>-1</sup> soil was noticed in AP horizon of pedon 1. The available manganese in soils of the study area ranged from 6.5 to 25.2 mg kg<sup>-1</sup> of soil. The lowest value of 6.5 mg kg<sup>-1</sup> of soil was noticed in Bt1 horizon of pedon 4 and the highest value of 25.2 mg kg<sup>-1</sup> soil was observed in AP horizon of pedon 1. The availability of these ions (Zn, Cu, Fe and Mn) increased with increase in organic matter because organic matter acts as a chelating agent for complexation of these micronutrients which reduces their adsorption, oxidation and precipitation into unavailable forms. Similar kind of relationship between Zn and organic carbon was also reported by Mahesh Kumar *et al.* (2011).

In conclusion, based on morphological, physical and physico-chemical properties of Mulugu division of warangal district were neutral to moderately alkaline, non-saline, low to medium in organic carbon and CEC. The exchangeable bases in all the pedons in the order of Ca<sup>2+</sup> > Mg<sup>2+</sup> > Na<sup>+</sup> > K<sup>+</sup> on the exchange complex. Whereas, the soils were low to medium in available nitrogen, low to high in available phosphorus and potassium. Available zinc was deficient to sufficient in all the horizon. The soils were sufficient in available iron, copper and manganese. The soils were classified as Typic Haplustepts, Typic Haplustalfs, Typic Haplusterts, Lithic Haplustalfs, Typic Haplusterts and Vertic Haplustept.

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**How to cite this article:**

Narsaiah, E., T. Ramprakash, M. Chandinipatnaik, D. Vishnuvardhan Reddy and Bhupal Raj, G. 2018. Soil Physical, Physico-Chemical Properties of Mulugu Division Soils of Warangal District, India. *Int.J.Curr.Microbiol.App.Sci*. 7(06): 2735-2748.  
doi: <https://doi.org/10.20546/ijcmas.2018.706.322>