ASSESSMENT OF DEPTH-DISTRIBUTED FALLOUT RADIONUCLIDE (FRNS) AND SOIL EROSION/DEPOSITION IN THE HILLSLOPE DISTRICT (KHAGRACHARI) IN BANGLADESH

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Abstracts. This experiment was carried out on a hillside at the Hill Research Centre in the Khagrachari (23°8.509’ E, 092°00.059’ N) district to ascertain the erosion rate and depth distribution of a single fallout radionuclide (FRN) (^{137}Cs, ^{210}Pb, ^{210}Pbex, and ^{226}Ra) in 2020. Five locations, the summit, upper slope, middle slope, lower slope, and bottom, were used to gather the soil samples. A possible reference location was found 200 m away from the study area, with an elevation of 382 feet above mean sea level. The average value for ^{137}Cs in the local reference inventory was 946.4 Bq m^{-2}. The distribution of FRN (^{137}Cs, ^{210}Pb, ^{210}Pbex, and ^{226}Ra) tended to decrease as the soil depth increased. Compared with the reference inventory, the total inventory of the FRN at various sites revealed a similar trend from the summit to higher slope positions, indicating that these positions experienced soil erosion. The reference inventory was 144.5%, 108.1%, and 28.8% lower than the inventory for the bottom position (2314 Bq m^{-2}), lower slope position (1969.5 Bq m^{-2}), and medium slope position (1218.8 Bq m^{-2}), respectively. The soil eroded from the summit and upper slope positions by 24.93 and 6.33 t ha^{-1} yr^{-1}, respectively, and was deposited at the middle slope position (10.21 t ha^{-1} yr^{-1}), lower slope position (38.34 t ha^{-1} yr^{-1}), and bottom position (51.26 t ha^{-1} yr^{-1}). These estimated erosion/deposition rates were derived from mass balance Model II. The sediment delivery ratio was -219%, the gross erosion rate was 5.2 t ha^{-1} yr^{-1}, and the net erosion rate was 11.4 t ha^{-1} yr^{-1}. The entire inventory was 23.4% and 63.6% smaller than the reference inventory for the upper slope position (725.4 Bq m^{-2}) and the summit (344.5 Bq m^{-2}), respectively. The inventories were 28.8%, 108.1%, and 144.5% greater than the reference inventory for the intermediate slope position (1218.8 Bq m^{-2}), lower slope position (1969.5 Bq m^{-2}), and bottom position (2314 Bq m^{-2}), respectively, indicating that this site experienced soil sedimentation.

Keywords: FRN, soil redistribution erosion, depth distribution, deposition, hillslope,

Introduction

As a significant contributor to land deterioration, soil erosion presents a global threat to the environment and socioeconomic stability. It is exacerbated by overgrazing, poor agricultural practices, and climate change, especially on steep terrain (Blanco-Canqui and Lal, 2010). Reduced soil quality, fertility, productivity, and bioactivity put food security and soil ecosystem services at risk (Duan et al., 2011; Kumar et al., 2023). In line with this, it also exposes organic materials found in soil to oxidation, which raises the possibility of global warming (Van Oost and Six, 2023).

In the last 50 years, fallout radionuclides (FRNs: ^{137}Cs, ^{210}Pb, ^{226}Ra $^{210}Pb_{ex}$, and ^{7}Be) have been widely used as soil tracers to provide estimates of induced soil erosion rates under different environmental conditions (Ritchie and Ritchie, 2001; Zapata, 2002; Mabit et al., 2008). Once on the ground, FRNs travel over the landscape mostly by physical processes because of their high binding to tiny particles in surface soil (IAEA, 2014). As a result, the redistribution of soil and silt may be effectively tracked via these conservative radiotracers.

For arable lands, where soil degradation from agricultural practices influences soil characteristics and landscape processes, FRN approaches are effective in examining temporal soil redistribution patterns (IAEA, 2014). In mountain grasslands, where the harsh topography and climate make it difficult to use more traditional methods, such as sediment traps, erosion pins, or experiments with simulated rainfall, it is also very useful for evaluating patterns of erosion and deposition (Konz et al., 2012; Alewell et al., 2014). Different land uses can influence how soil is redistributed, resulting in erosion and/or deposition processes, which can also influence the siltation of natural and artificial water bodies (FAO, 2019).

The FRN method can be completed in a single sampling campaign and offers information on erosion processes that have affected a particular study area since the chosen FRN was deposited. This eliminates the need for time-consuming and expensive procedures that are typically needed to monitor sites over extended periods of time (Mabit et al., 2008, 2013). The technique is based on a targeted FRN comparison, which compares the inventory (total activity per unit area) at a sample location to that measured at a reference site that is nearby, undisturbed, and free of soil erosion and deposition.

When the rate of erosion of unploughed soils is estimated, the profile distribution models (PDMs) of Walling et al. (2011, 2014) are highly useful. The diffusion and migration model (DMM) and the mass balance model (MBM) consider the various vertical distributions of FRN in the soil on the basis of the migration processes following primary FRN deposition and the type of land use (ploughed or unploughed). Fallout radionuclides (FRNs) are frequently employed in studies on soil erosion (Zhang et al., 2006; Mabit et al., 2014a; Fulajtar et al., 2017). Nevertheless, a large body of research employing FRNs has concentrated on field size, with relatively few investigations and contrasting erosion rates calculated using both ^{137}Cs and $^{210}Pbex$ (Porto et al., 2016).

By comparing the ^{137}Cs inventories measured for individual sampling points with the reference inventory and using calibration models that relate the percentage loss or gain in the inventories to rates of soil loss or deposition, the study aims to estimate erosion and sedimentation rates. The reference inventory will be established through sampling of reference locations, comprehensive soil sampling to document the depth distribution of FRN (^{137}Cs, ^{210}Pb, ^{226}Ra, and $^{210}Pbex$), and total inventory.

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Materials and methods

Study site

At the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute’s Hill Research Center in Khagrachari, Bangladesh (23°8.509’ E, 092°00.059’ N - 23°08.492’ E, 092°00.047’ N), a hill slope served as the study site (*Fig. 1*). The height above sea level is approximately 382 feet. The average annual temperature was recorded as 34.6°C, with a minimum of 13°C and an average rainfall of 3031 mm. The climate was categorized as semiarid continental monsoon.

Figure 1. *Experimental site*

Soil sampling

Soil samples were taken from five different locations on the hill: the summit (S), upper slope (US), middle slope (MS), lower slope (LS), and bottom (B) to ascertain the profile changes in the FRN (^{137}Cs, ^{210}Pb, ^{226}Ra, and ^{210}Pbex). The slope was 75 m wide by 60 m long. From each location, five sample points were chosen. An 8-cm diameter hand-operated core sampler was used to gather samples at 10- and 15-meter intervals along each transect of a hill slope and on terraces. At every sampling location, a single core was gathered and subsequently bulked to create a composite sample. To guarantee comprehensive FRN inventories of the soil profile, soil sampling depths were measured at the top (0–30 cm), upper and middle positions (0–45 cm), lower slope positions (0–60 cm), and bottom positions (0–100 cm with 5 cm increments).

When using ^{137}Cs data to estimate catchment erosion and sedimentation, the creation of a reference inventory is crucial. In response to these concerns, a prospective reference location with an elevation of 382 feet above mean sea level was found 200 m away from the research catchment (23°08.293’ E, 91°59.815’ N). Twelve cores, consisting of three replicate samples, were taken from a 10 × 10 square at depths ranging from 0 to 60 cm in 5 cm increments. The site, which is inside the study catchment, has little slope, no erosion or deposition, and it is completely covered with vegetation.

Analysis

The soil samples were weighed, allowed to air dry, and then sieved through a 2 mm screen. The amounts of ^{137}Cs, ^{210}Pb, ^{226}Ra, and ^{210}Pbex were determined via a

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multichannel analyzer connected to a hyperpure coaxial Ge detector. Using a counting duration of more than 80,000 s, the concentration of ^{137}Cs in the samples was found at 662 keV, yielding an analytical precision of ± 6% for ^{137}Cs. Mass balance Model 2 was used to calculate the rate of soil erosion–deposition (Walling and He, 1997).

Results

Depth redistribution of FRN (^{137}Cs, ^{210}Pb, ^{226}Ra and $^{210}Pb_{ex}$) at the reference site

The depth distributions of the ^{137}Cs activities and total inventories for the sampled reference profiles are shown in *Figure 2*. The ^{137}Cs activity of the reference populations decreased precipitously from 2.03 Bq kg^{-1} in the 0–5 cm layer to 0.52 Bq kg^{-1} in the 50–55 cm soil layer; no ^{137}Cs was detected in the 55–60 cm soil layer. The distribution of the ^{137}Cs probability with depth decreased to 55 cm; no ^{137}Cs activities were detected below this depth. The average value for the local reference inventory was 946.4 Bq m^{-2}. It is advised to compare these measurements made at the reference site with the location's projected global distribution value of ^{137}Cs.

Another notable decrease in ^{210}Pb activity was observed at 35–40 cm, ranging from 81.6 Bq kg^{-1} at 0–5 cm depth to 32.7 Bq kg^{-1}. ^{210}Pb had a total inventory of 33607.4 Bq m^{-2} at the reference inventory. The distribution of ^{226}Ra activity varied, ranging from 31.5 Bq kg^{-1} at 55-60 cm depth to 24.9 Bq kg^{-1} at 0-5 cm depth. At the reference site, the total inventory of ^{226}Ra was 33607.4 Bq m^{-2}. As the soil depth increased, the ^{210}Pbex activity decreased sharply, ranging from 56.64 Bq kg^{-1} at 0–5 cm to 5.6 Bq kg^{-1} at 35–40 cm. The overall inventory was 14417.0 Bq m^{-2}.

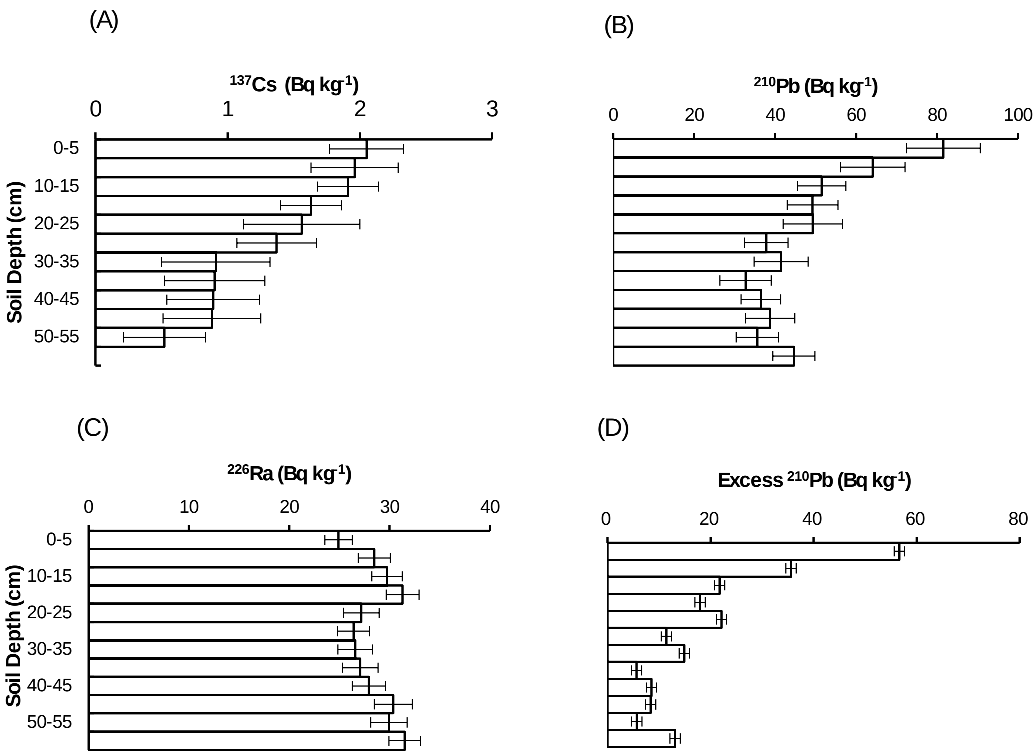

Figure 2. *Depth distributions of (A) ^{137}Cs, (B) ^{210}Pb, (C) ^{226}Ra and (D) $^{210}Pb_{ex}$ activity in undisturbed soil and reference sites. The error bar indicates the standard deviation (SD±), which was calculated from three replicates for each treatment*

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Quantifying the depth redistribution FRN (^{137}Cs, ^{210}Pb, ^{226}Ra and $^{210}Pb_{ex}$)

Cultivation is commonly used on terraced fields in steeply sloping areas when alternative approaches are not suitable for measuring erosion. Since the height, width, and length of terraces influence soil erosion, there is no trustworthy formula for determining the slope of terraced fields. ^{210}Pb, ^{226}Ra, ^{210}Pbex, and ^{137}Cs were dispersed over the upper 0–30 cm at the summit position (*Fig. 3*) of the experimental site. In the summit position study areas, where most erosion was predicted to occur but no deposition occurred, the ^{137}Cs activity ranged from 1.72 ± 0.21 to 0.44 ± 0.21 Bq kg^{-1}, the ^{210}Pb activity ranged from 79.7 ± 8.59 to 42.51 ± 6.11 Bq kg^{-1}, the ^{226}Ra activity ranged from 28.39 ± 1.48 to 2.71 ± 1.37 Bq kg^{-1}, and the ^{210}Pbex activity ranged from 55.23 ± 8.68 to 13.38 ± 6.33 Bq kg^{-1}.

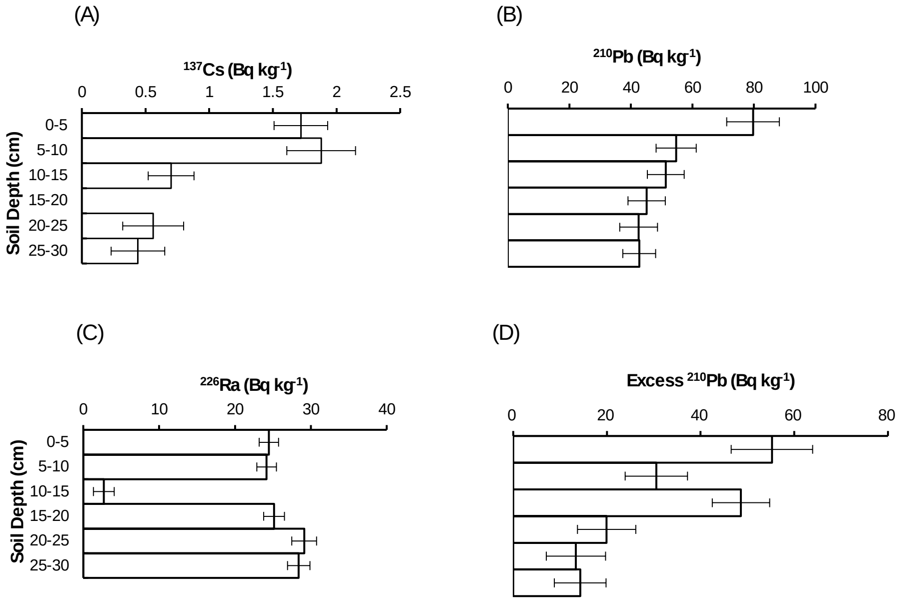

Figure 3. *Depth distributions of (A) ^{137}Cs, (B) ^{210}Pb, (C) ^{226}Ra and (D) $^{210}Pb_{ex}$ at the summit. The error bar indicates the standard deviation (SD±), which was calculated from three replicates for each treatment*

With respect to the higher slope position, ^{210}Pb, ^{226}Ra, and ^{210}Pbex were detected at depths of 0–45 cm, whereas ^{137}Cs was detected at depths of 0–40 cm (*Fig. 4*). In the studies conducted on the upper slope of the terraced areas, the ^{137}Cs activity ranged from 2.11 ± 0.26 to 0.87 ± 0.2 Bq kg^{-1}, the ^{210}Pb activity ranged from 76.83 ± 8.91 to 30.55 ± 5.29 Bq kg^{-1}, the ^{226}Ra activity ranged from 27.03 ± 1.39 to 24.27 ± 1.37 Bq kg^{-1}, and the ^{210}Pbex activity ranged from 51.53 ± 9.02 to 6.28 ± 5.46 Bq kg^{-1}. Because of human activity, this upper cultivated slope is considered a vulnerable area where soil erosion is prevalent.

Depending on the length and width of the slope location, the middle slope was taken into consideration for both soil deposition and erosion. The FRNs were dispersed across the upper 0–45 cm of the middle slope soil (*Fig. 5*). The ^{137}Cs activity varied from 4.19 ± 0.32 to 0.29 ± 0.15 Bq kg^{-1}, the ^{210}Pb activity ranged from 83.92 ± 9.6 to 35.77 ± 4.71 Bq kg^{-1}, the ^{226}Ra activity ranged from 28.77 ± 1.6 to 24.96 ± 1.27 Bq kg$^{-1,}$ and the $^{210}Pb_{ex}$ activity ranged from 58.18 ± 9.7 to 7.86 ± 5.88 Bq kg^{-1} at the middle slope position of the study site.

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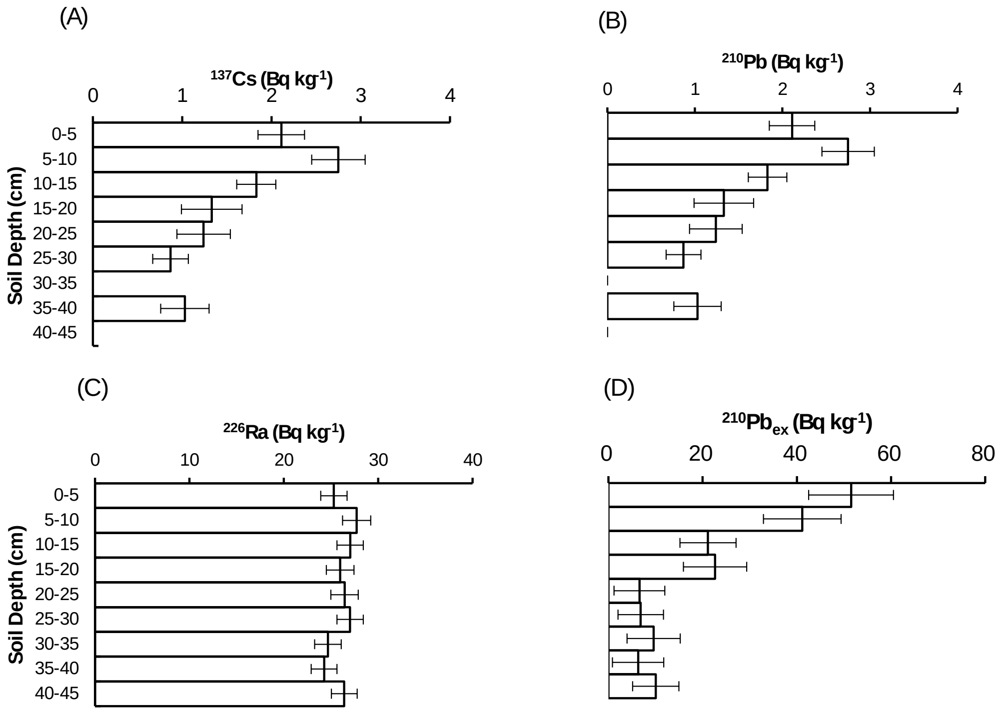

Figure 4. *Depth distributions of (A) ^{137}Cs, (B) ^{210}Pb, (C) ^{226}Ra and (D) $^{210}Pb_{ex}$ at the upper slope position. The error bar indicates the standard deviation (SD±), which was calculated from three replicates for each treatment*

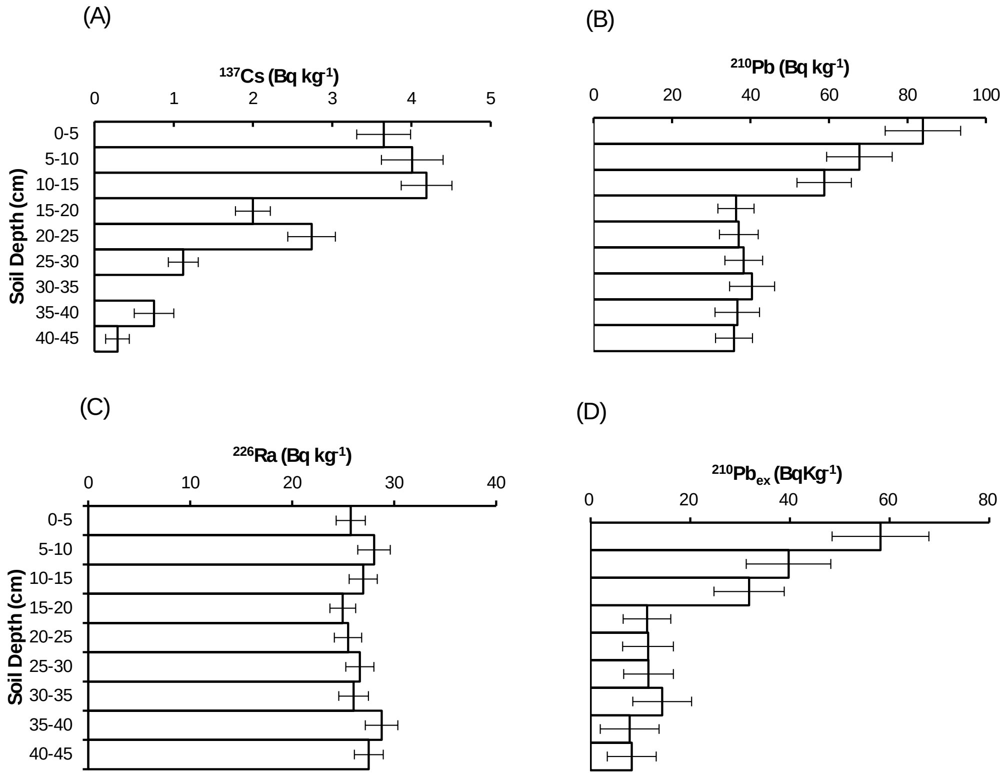

Figure 5. *Depth distributions of (A) ^{137}Cs, (B) ^{210}Pb, (C) ^{226}Ra and (D) $^{210}Pb_{ex}$ at the middle slope position. The error bar indicates the standard deviation (SD±), which was calculated from three replicates for each treatment*

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The fallout radionuclide distributions were impacted by the lower slope position, which also had a substantially deeper layer of FRN throughout the time and cultivation period. Compared with the other slope sites, deeper soils presented greater FRN activity. FRNs were discovered in the upper 0–60 cm soil depth at lower slope positions (*Fig. 6*). At the lower position of the study site, the ^{137}Cs activity varied from 6.13 ± 0.38 to 0.39 ± 0.17 Bq kg^{-1}, the ^{210}Pb activity ranged from 88.66 ± 9.81 to 25.84 ± 4.08 Bq kg^{-1}, the + Ra activity ranged from 30.31 ± 1.65 to 25.4 ± 1.38 Bq kg^{-1}, and the ^{210}Pbex activity ranged from 60.02 ± 9.94 to 2.28 ± 4.14 Bq kg^{-1}.

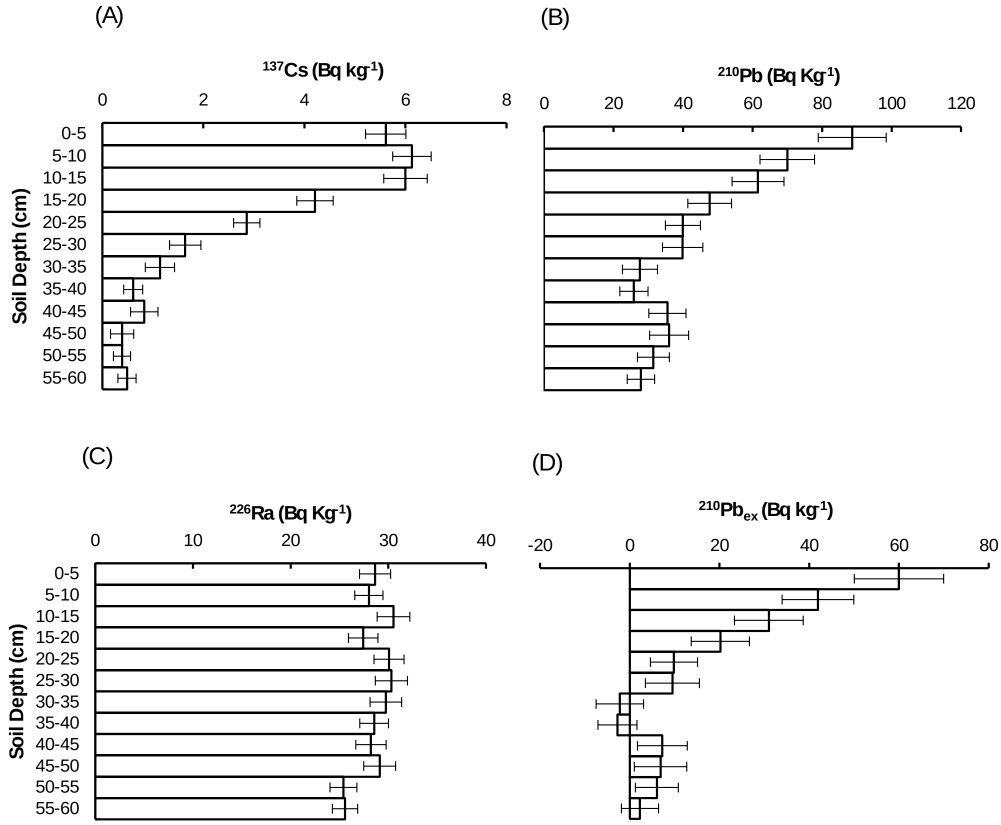

***Figure 6.** Depth distributions of (A) ^{137}Cs, (B) ^{210}Pb, (C) ^{226}Ra and (D) ^{210}Pb$_{ex}$ at the lower slope position. The error bar indicates the standard deviation (SD±), which was calculated from three replicates for each treatment*

The slope position affected the fallout radionuclide distributions; in the lower position, FRN was present in a layer that was significantly deeper during the time and cultivation period, and the depth of FRN presence typically increased gradually. At the bottom position, ^{137}Cs was distributed in the top 0–70 cm, and ^{210}Pb, ^{226}Ra and ^{210}Pb$_{ex}$ were distributed in the 0–100 cm (*Fig. 7*). The ^{137}Cs activity varied from 4.82 ± 0.42 to 0.37 ± 0.17 Bq kg^{-1}, the ^{210}Pb activity ranged from 89.99 ± 2.91 to 26.95 ± 4.09 Bq kg^{-1}, the ^{226}Ra activity ranged from 28.87 ± 1.48 to 20.37 ± 1.21 Bq kg$^{-1,}$ and the ^{210}Pb$_{ex}$ activity ranged from 61.12 ± 3.26 to 2.19 ± 4.29 Bq kg^{-1} at the study site in the lower position.

Figure 8 displays the entire ^{137}Cs inventory of the reference site at various slope positions. The average values for the local reference ^{137}Cs, ^{210}Pb, ^{226}Ra, and ^{210}Pbex inventories were 946.4 Bq m^{-2}, 36607.4 Bq m^{-2}, 22190.4 Bq m^{-2}, and 14417 Bq m^{-2}, respectively.

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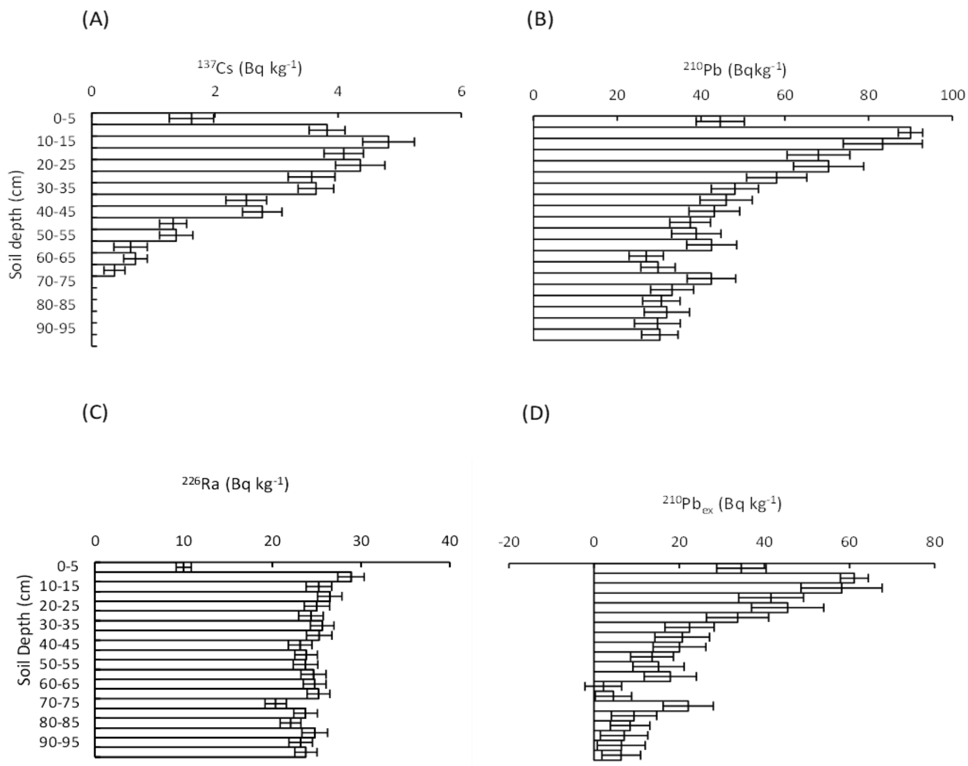

Figure 7. *Depth distributions of (A) ^{137}Cs, (B) ^{210}Pb, (C) ^{226}Ra and (D) $^{210}Pb_{ex}$ at the bottom position. The error bar indicates the standard deviation (SD±), which was calculated from three replicates for each treatment*

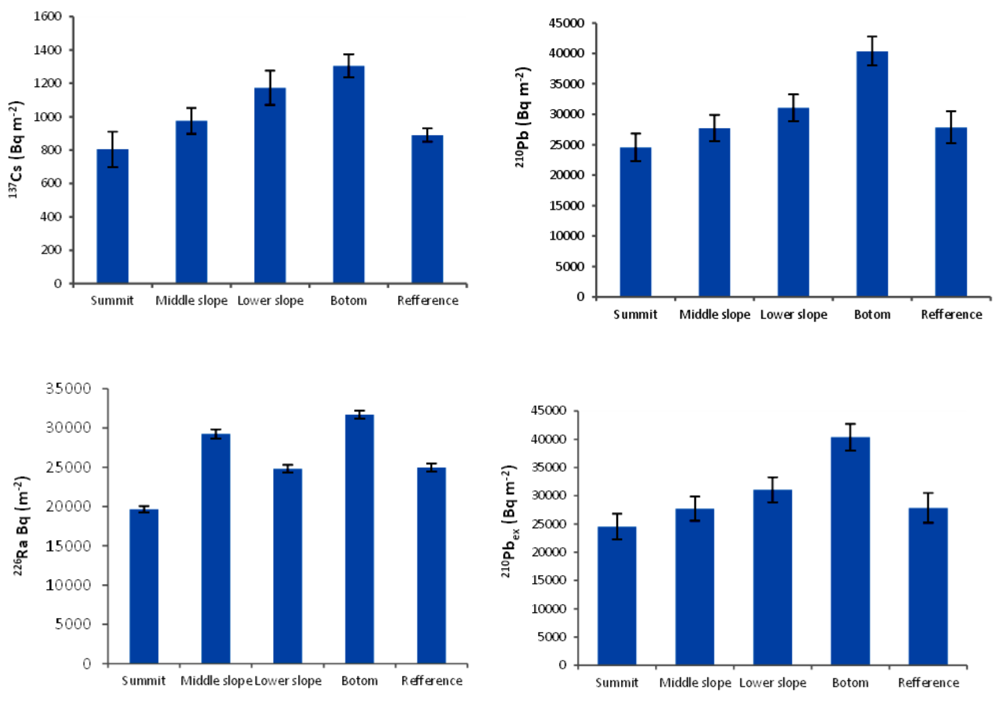

Figure 8. *Total FRN ((A) ^{137}Cs, (B) ^{210}Pb, (C) ^{226}Ra and (D) $^{210}Pb_{ex}$) inventories (Bq m^{-2}) of the reference site and different slope positions. The error bar indicates the standard deviation (SD±), which was calculated from three replicates for each treatment*

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The entire inventory was 23.4% and 63.6% smaller than the reference inventory for the upper slope position (725.4 Bq m^{-2}) and the summit (344.5 Bq m^{-2}), respectively. This result suggested that soil erosion had occurred in these locations (*Fig. 9*). The reference inventory was 144.5%, 108.1%, and 28.8% lower than the inventory for the bottom position (2314 Bq m^{-2}), lower slope position (1969.5 Bq m^{-2}), and medium slope position (1218.8 Bq m^{-2}), respectively. Thus, soil sedimentation may have occurred at this position.

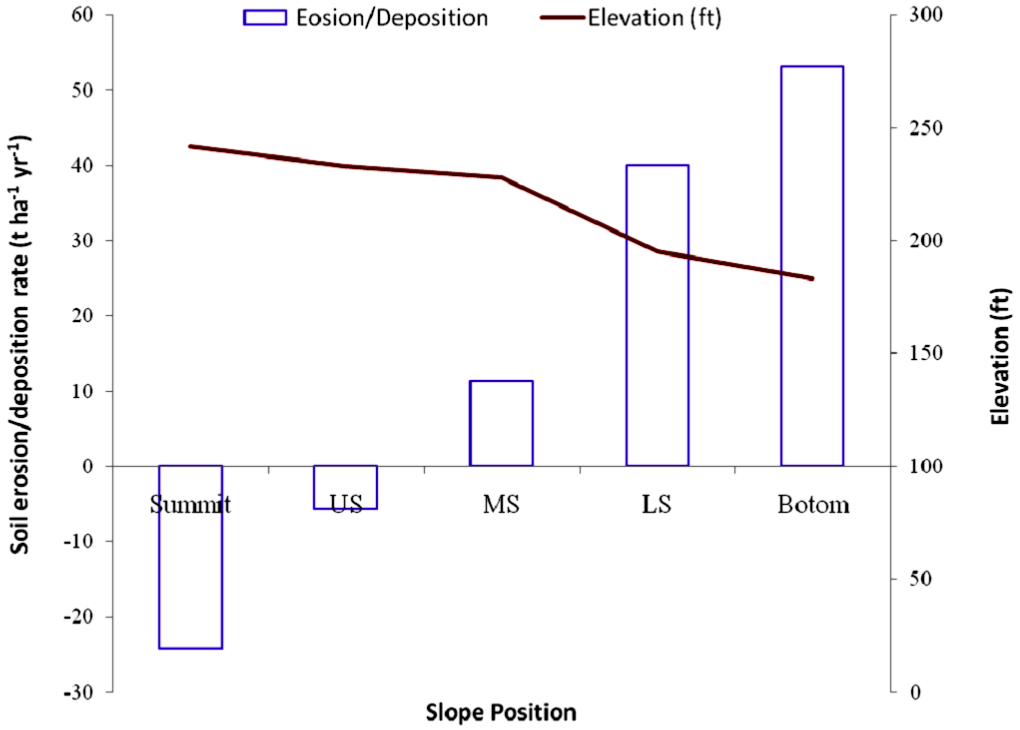

Figure 9. *Soil erosion (-ve) and deposition (+ve) rates at different slope positions and elevations*

To determine the rates of soil erosion and sedimentation associated with FRN stocks, mass balance models are available. The estimated erosion/deposition rates from mass balance Model II indicated that soil eroded from the summit and upper slope positions by 24.93 and 6.33 t ha^{-1} yr^{-1}, respectively, and was deposited at the middle slope position (10.21 t ha^{-1} yr^{-1}), lower slope position (38.34 t ha^{-1} yr^{-1}), and bottom position (51.26 t ha^{-1} yr^{-1}). Mass balance models have been used frequently to determine the spatial patterns of erosion and deposition rates. The sediment delivery ratio was -219%, the gross erosion rate was 5.2 t ha^{-1} yr^{-1}, and the net erosion rate was 11.4 t ha^{-1} yr^{-1}. The lower elevation received soil that had eroded from the higher level.

Discussion

Natural processes such as soil erosion and the ensuing soil redistribution caused by wind and water can be sped up by human activities such as overgrazing, mismanaged farms, land use changes, and deforestation. These processes not only result in offsite issues with sediment mobilization and transport as well as associated toxins that can

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enter dams, reservoirs, and water bodies but also generate onsite soil losses that impact crop yield (Dercon et al., 2006; Schmitter et al., 2010). In a different type of erosion known as tillage erosion, the gradual downslope movement of soil caused by tillage can result in soil loss and buildup in fields as well as worsening wind and water erosion (Dercon et al., 2007). Although soil erosion is the most common land degradation process in the world, emerging nations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America account for more than three-quarters of the total agricultural acreage damaged by erosion.

Measurement of ^{137}Cs

Gamma spectroscopy involves a specialized piece of equipment needed for the analysis of FRNs in soils and sediments. Its unique energy peak at a comparatively high energy level (662.66 KeV), which is unaffected by other radionuclides currently in use, makes measuring ^{137}Cs easier. As a result, it is simple to identify the concentration of ^{137}Cs isotopes in soil, which also makes it simple to use for studies on soil erosion. A high-purity germanium semiconductor detector (HPGe) with an amplifier connected to a multichannel analyser (MCA) and a computer with data evaluation software make up the Gamma Spectroscopic Analytical Set (Fulajtar et al., 2017).

Reference site

The depth distributions of FRN for the reference profile display higher concentrations at the surface and an approximately exponential decay distribution with depth (*Fig. 1*). By measuring the loss or accumulation of soil particles, the ^{137}Cs inventory in the soil can be used to quantify the soil erosion rate as the original fallout decreases due to radioactive decay. Because of this, a reference site with an undisturbed location with little to no erosion or sedimentation is needed for the measurement (IAEA, 2014; Walling and Quine, 1993). The FRN (^{137}Cs, ^{210}Pb, ^{226}Ra and $^{210}Pb_{ex}$) activities of the reference profiles declined sharply from the surface layer to the deeper layer to 55 cm, but the 55–60 cm depth of the soil did not contain FRN. An average value for ^{137}Cs of 946.4 Bq m^{-2} was found for the local reference inventory of the study area. Mandal et al. (2019) conducted a study in Dehradun, India, a neighboring country and reported ^{137}Cs values ranging from 944 to 1170 Bq m^{-2}. Tagami et al. (2019) conducted a study to assess the spatial distribution of ^{137}Cs reference site soils in South Asia and reported values ranging from 860 to 3731 Bq m^{-2}. The assessment of the erosion rate is based on the study of ^{137}Cs in the soil at reference and sample sites (Zhang et al., 2021). To the best of our knowledge, this paper provides the first study of soil erosion in hilly areas of Bangladesh using ^{137}Cs.

Depth distributions for different slopes

The numerous elements that influence soil erosion include soil type, long-term management/conservation techniques, rainfall amount and intensity, lithology, hill slope position, slope class, and land cover density. It is especially useful for long-term assessments of soil erosion with net carbon loss and carbon fate in particular sectors since, in contrast to empirical models, it provides accurate estimations (Mariappan et al., 2022). According to Stroosnijder (2005), the FRN technique is more appropriate for studying natural (geological) erosion in landscape ecology and geomorphology than it is for studying human-caused accelerated erosion. Parsons and Foster (2011) questioned the suitability of FRNs in hilly and mountainous areas with uneven soil distributions

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and the characteristics of bare rock outcrops. Despite this, several studies by Evrard et al. (2020), Foucher et al. (2021), and Meusburger et al. (2018) highlighted the validity and application of the FRN Caesium-137, the most widely used and reliable tracer for assessing the soil erosion rate and understanding erosion processes. The upper slope experienced greater erosion and downwards to the middle slope and lower slope, and deposition took place at the bottom of the hill slope. The observed soil redistribution patterns on terraced fields align with the erosion and deposition patterns typically associated with soil erosion, as indicated by previous studies (Meliho et al., 2019; Quine et al., 1999).

Estimation of erosion

From the highest fallout period in South America (1964–1972) to the sample date, ^{137}Cs readings are used to derive information on mean yearly erosion rates during the previous 50–60 years (Chaboche et al., 2021, 2022). The methodological recommendations for applying this approach are given by Zapata (2002), Mabit et al. (2014b) and Fulajtar et al. (2017).

We can recreate soil redistribution rates and assess the sustainability of farming techniques during the period of agricultural intensification beginning in roughly the 1960s by measuring soil inventories of ^{137}Cs (Zapata, 2003; Vanwalleghem et al., 2017). Consequently, the older erosion events that occurred shortly after ^{137}Cs fell were mostly reflected in the ^{137}Cs tracer. Recent soil loss has less of an impact on the ^{137}Cs inventories since these events occurred after a portion of the ^{137}Cs had already vanished as a result of decay and earlier erosion. Accordingly, rather than contemporary soil redistribution, ^{137}Cs inventories should be more sensitive to historical erosion events (Zhang et al., 2006; Porto et al., 2016).

In the study region, the total ^{137}Cs inventory of farmed sites was lower than the reference inventory, indicating net soil loss; however, it was greater at the bottom position, indicating sediment deposition. According to Gutierrez et al. (2015), soil loss was more noticeable on steeply sloping terraces and comparatively less noticeable on moderately sloping terraces because the rate of soil movement downslope was proportional to the slope.

To convert the FRN inventory into soil redistribution rates for ploughed and/or unploughed soils, numerous conversion models have been created (Walling et al., 2011; Arata et al., 2016; Gharbi et al., 2020). To establish FRN inventories for rates of soil erosion and sedimentation, a variety of models, ranging from straightforward empirical models to intricate mass balance models, are available (Walling et al., 2007). Mass balance models have been widely applied to ascertain the spatial distribution of rates of deposition and erosion. Because it produces physically realistic results, mass balance model II (MBM-II) is typically used to transform total FRN activities into soil redistribution rates (Zhang et al., 1999).

The redistribution of ^{137}Cs in the landscape was likely significantly influenced by topographic parameters such as slope, slope form, and aspect. The slope gradient and slope length are known to affect farmland soil erosion and runoff rates (Zhao et al., 2022). The estimated erosion/deposition soil eroded from the summit and upper slope positions by 24.93 and 6.33 t ha^{-1} yr^{-1}, respectively, and was deposited at the middle slope position (10.21 t ha^{-1} yr^{-1}), lower slope position (38.34 t ha^{-1} yr^{-1}), and bottom position (51.26 t ha^{-1} yr^{-1}). This result is similar to that of Kothyari et al. (2004), where the maximum soil erosion rate, 5.47 t ha^{-1} yr^{-1}, was recorded. According to

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Kalambukkattu et al. (2021), soil erosion rates in deciduous and evergreen forests range from 10 t ha^{-1} yr^{-1}. as opposed to cultivated regions. Mass balance models have been used frequently to determine the spatial patterns of erosion and deposition rates. The sediment delivery ratio was -219%, the gross erosion rate was 5.2 t ha^{-1} yr^{-1}, and the net erosion rate was 11.4 t ha^{-1} yr^{-1}. The lower elevation received soil that had eroded from the higher level.

This is because multiple calibration techniques have shown this to be the case. An erosion model's description of the processes involved in soil redistribution and erosion can be clarified with the help of the FRN. This method allows us to determine the geographical distribution of the soil erosion rate at the point scale, and it can be used as an exclusive or supplemental approach for soil erosion estimation.

Conclusion

Determining the erosion rates that occurred in the first decades following atmospheric nuclear weapon tests (1960s-1990s) is made possible via ^{137}Cs. Depending on the elevation, FRN (^{137}Cs, ^{210}Pb, ^{226}Ra, and ^{210}Pbex) was dispersed in the soil at various depths at our study site. The soil was deposited at the middle slope position (10.21 t ha^{-1} yr^{-1}), lower slope position (38.34 t ha^{-1} yr^{-1}), and bottom position (51.26 t ha^{-1} yr^{-1}) and eroded from the summit and upper slope positions by 24.93 and 6.33 t ha^{-1} yr^{-1}, respectively. The sediment delivery ratio was -219%, the gross erosion rate was 5.2 t ha^{-1} yr^{-1}, and the net erosion rate was 11.4 t ha^{-1} yr^{-1}. Our analysis also revealed that in heavily eroded farmed slopes, ^{210}Pb, ^{226}Ra, and ^{210}Pbex presented relatively high mass concentrations. The study also highlighted the necessity of thoroughly investigating the ^{137}Cs potential in the area and revealed the potential of the ^{137}Cs potential as a marker for tracking soil redistribution throughout hill slopes.

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Conflict of interests. The authors declare that they have no competing financial interests.

Data availability statement. The datasets generated during and/or analyzed during the current study will be available from the corresponding author upon request.

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