MOUNTAIN FARMING SYSTEMS

Discussion Paper Series

**IRRIGATION DEVELOPMENT : THE MANAGEMENT AND USE OF
IRRIGATION IN THE MOUNTAINS OF NEPAL**

Prachanda Pradhan and Robert Yoder

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International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development

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PREFACE

ICIMOD's approach to problem oriented research involves both knowledge reviews and field studies. The focused reviews and field studies conducted by the Mountain Farming Systems Division cover various aspects of agricultural development. Since early 1988, a series of 'state of the art' reviews of agricultural policies and programmes were sponsored by ICIMOD in different countries of the HKH Region. The purpose of these studies and the subsequent National Workshops in different countries was to understand some of the constraints and prospects of Mountain area development. These exercises were also aimed at acquiring comparative perspectives of development approaches and strategies in different countries.

This paper was also a part of this series of studies, commissioned by ICIMOD, and was also presented at the workshop on "Nepalese Experiences in Mountain Agriculture : Policies and Strategies" organised jointly by the Ministry of Agriculture, HMG/N, and ICIMOD. This paper focuses upon the management and use of irrigation in the mountains of Nepal and the responsibility of the content rests with the authors and does not necessarily reflect the views and policy of IIMI or the Water and Energy Commission Secretariat with which IIMI is affiliated in Nepal.

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Nepal has a total land area of about 141,000 km². Due to the rugged hill and mountain terrain it is estimated that only 22 per cent of the total area can be cultivated. Although the hill and mountain regions account for over 75 per cent of Nepal's total land area, these contribute to less than 20 per cent of the cultivated area. More than half of the cultivated area is in the low-land plains of the Terai, along Nepal's southern border (ADB and HMG/N 1982).

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