



Ownership and management of irrigation water in the eastern Hindu Kush: a study of Mehlp valley, Chitral, northern Pakistan

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: Both ownership and management of irrigation water resources varies from village to village in the whole mountainous belt of northern Pakistan. The locally devised water management systems highly depend on the availability of water and traditionally formulated rules and regulation for its utilization. In most of the cases irrigation water is treated as a common property resource with some distinctive characteristics. Unlike other common property resources access and withdrawal right of irrigation water are diverse. The access rights, both in term of volume and duration of use held by a household or group of households, are permanent but are always subject to other prerequisites. The inability of the owner to abide by the rules and regulations regarding the operation and maintenance of the irrigation system may result in the suspension of the ownership. The existing ownership and withdrawal rights are very old that have been formulated in about a century ago and still functioning without any particular problem. In the present study a peripheral valley has been selected to highlight the system of irrigation water ownership and management at a micro level. Few case studies have been presented to show the complexity of ownership and diversity of water uses in an arid mountain environment.