

1 p.m., the sun being too hot for work in the Valley after 1 p.m. Men receive, on the average, IL.250 (\$6) net for the same work.

The women of Zbeidat are preferred as hired workers to those recruited gangs, since they can work longer for only a marginally higher wage (from which, of course, no deductions are made) but they happen to be in short supply precisely when the demand for labour is high, since during the harvest they work at their own family farm. During the later periods of harvest, when their own household needs are met, they occasionally hire themselves and their children's work to the Jewish settlements nearby, picking flowers and vegetables at Argaman and Masu'a, the Israeli settlements nearby.

Day labourers are recruited by the contractors from highland villages which are within the transport network of Zbeidat and Marj Na'je. Most of them are female workers brought in trucks by the contractors from Tubas, Tammoun, Rammoun, Kufr Malik, and from the two refugee camps of Ballatah and Askar (Abu Hilal, 1980:Inter.; Nahhas, 1980:inter.). The harvest peak period in the Valley, when the demand for hired labour is highest, corresponds to periods or relative lull in agricultural activities in the highlands. Female workers are generally more available since their participation in the workforce employed in Israel is very low and their own households can afford to release them between November and March, the months of highest labour demand in Zbeidat and Marj Na'je.

During the sowing period the pressure for hired labour is much lower and the custom in Zbeidat (as well as in Marj Na'je) is for farmers to mutually help each other, at no cost, when they finish sowing their own fields.

One major consequence for this increased demand on family labour is the negative impact it has had on the education of male and (especially) female children. While the trend in West Bank rural areas is towards closing