

Notwithstanding security hazards, it would have been possible to reach a larger sample through the help of hired interviewers, but the researcher would then have been denied the opportunity of acquiring a deeper insight into the intricate and highly controversial profitability dynamics of West Bank rainfed agriculture. In the case of some less important types of farming (eg plums, apricots, and figs), the researcher procured profitability data from a study published by the Planning Section in the Department of Agriculture.¹

Interviewing of local experts on the problems, constraints, and projected needs of their respective lines of farming did not involve sampling problems. During his fairly long stay and extensive travels in the country, the researcher was able to reach a large number of respondents representing all institutions and bodies involved in the process of agricultural development. Considerable attention was given to the technicians in the Department of Agriculture, cooperatives, and agricultural institutions. Commission agents and dealers of farm supplies also provided valuable information and interpretation of underlying trends. Heads of local councils, "mukhtars", and noted public figures provided useful information on the mechanisms and problems involved in channelling development funds from external sources to finance local needs. Several "sheiks" (Muslim authority figures) were interviewed on such matters as interest charges, female labour, and attitudes toward manual work.

The political setting of agricultural development was explored

1. The Economics of Common Farming Enterprises (Beit Eil: Department of Agriculture, 1979).

with several Palestinian leaders inside and outside the West Bank. These politicians were interviewed on the subject of alternative settlement scenarios which they envisaged for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. As argued later at length in Chapter X, it was decided to give priority to exploring the prospects of development under the present state of continued occupation. Development prospects under autonomy or independence do not command similar urgency and might duly be conducted through later independent studies.

Review of the Literature

This section contains a review of those books and publications which were of direct bearing on the topic addressed by the researcher. For the sake of clarity, cited literature is classified into various groups, whether in regard to its origin or purpose.

It is interesting to note that while university libraries are well endowed with studies on agricultural and rural development, even in some of the more remote countries of the third world, research on development problems in the West Bank and other occupied territories is scanty and inadequate for planning purposes. The problem stems essentially from the peculiar setting of these territories under a military administration which has strong reasons for restricting information on these territories, and more so for preventing any independent assessment of their development. In its endeavour to embargo "undesirable" research and publication activities, the Military Government has had many legal injunctions at its disposal, some of which date back to the British Mandate and the Ottoman rule of more than half a century ago.