

rural migration through the adoption of programs which improve rural standards of living, while simultaneously expanding exploitation of abundant resources.

Sex and age distribution

West Bank population is characterized by a markedly young age composition and the preponderance of women in the age groups ranging from 25 - 50 years of age. Table (II-18) shows that 45.1% of population is below fourteen years, as compared with

Table (II - 18)

Population by sex and age (in percentages)

December 31, 1979

Age group	West Bank			Israeli Jews		
	Females	Males	Total	Females	Males	Totals
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
0-14	42.8	47.3	45.1	29.5	31.4	30.4
15-29	27.8	29.8	28.8	25.3	26.3	25.8
30-44	13.7	9.8	11.7	17.2	17.0	17.1
45-64	11.8	9.2	10.5	17.9	16.2	17.0
65+	3.9	3.9	3.9	10.1	9.1	9.7

Source: Statistical Abstract of Israel, 1980, op cit, pp 54, 67B.

only 30.4% for Israel's Jews. Whereas the percentage of the population in the productive age groups ranging from 30 - 64 years drops considerably below that of Israeli Jews (22.2% vs. 34.1%), which is a clear indication of the high rate of emigration by males of this age in pursuit of employment abroad. Another important cause of the young composition of population is the very high rate of births in the West Bank, estimated at 44.9 per thousand, vs. 22.0 for Israeli Jews.¹

1. Statistical Abstract of Israel, 1980, op cit, p 4, 679.

The distribution of population by sex reveals a clear feminine majority in the age group of 30 - 44, which is another reflection of the massive exodus of West Bank males in search of employment.

The excessively young nature of the population and the femininity of the working age group entail significant socio-economic consequences which are of direct relevance in agricultural development in the West Bank. Although available figures do not reflect differences in those attributes relative to types of settlement, it is generally felt that the severity of the youth feature and the predominance of females is particularly acute in rural areas due to a much more vigorous emigration, whether for employment or education. The dynamics of the rural labour market will be explored further in a later section.

Education

Palestinians are well-known in the area for their high standards of education. This is clearly designated in such criteria as relatively low illiteracy (e.g. West Bank 26 percent, 54 in Iraq and 37 percent in Syria) and high ratio of population enrolled in schools at various levels (about 37 percent of population).¹

But the picture is most noticeable in the case of college education.

According to UNESCO reports, the ratio of college students to the total West Bank population is among the highest in the world, supposedly ranking only second to that of the United States (3000 and 3471 students, respectively, per 100,000 of population).²

1. Computed from Administered Territories Statistics Quarterly 1980, op cit, p 155.

2. Corresponding ratios for some other countries: Egypt 565, Pakistan 278, France 1239, Israel 1488. Source: UNESCO, 1968-69. Quoted from Sami Mar'i, Higher Education of the Palestinians - with Special Reference to the West Bank, published in the Palestinians and the Middle East Conflict (Israel: Turtle Dove Publishing, 1977) p 436.