

TRADITIONS VERSUS CHANGING BEDOUIN ATTITUDES TOWARD HIGHER EDUCATION: HOW DO BEDOUIN COLLEGE STUDENTS PERCEIVE THEIR FAMILY'S ATTITUDES TO HIGHER EDUCATION?

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Abstract – *In 1991 Oranim Teachers' College adopted a teacher-training programme for Bedouin students in the north of Israel. The programme objectives included staffing Bedouin schools with Bedouin teachers and elevating the educational level of the community. Participation in this college programme by culturally insular Bedouin communities indicates a shift in traditional values worthy of investigation. Student socio-economic background is explored to determine attitude transformations enabling family and clan approval for their participation. It became apparent that as the tribe modernises, transformations ensue affecting the status of women and family life. Hence, this study focuses on educational attitudes of Bedouin students, their nuclear and extended families. The results indicate accelerated attitude changes within the tribe toward education, especially for women. Moreover, student attitudes concerning becoming instruments of educational innovation were also explored. The ramifications are discussed as they pertain to Bedouin society.*

Introduction

In 1991, a new teachers' training programme was introduced at Oranim Teachers' College, The School of Education for the Kibbutz Movement, to accommodate post-high school Bedouin students from the northern part of Israel. The programme had three specific aims: First, to develop well-educated Bedouin teachers to staff their local village schools. Second, to reward Bedouin citizenry for their continued loyalty and volunteerism to the State of Israel. Finally, to extend and vitalise a policy of co-existence between the Jewish and Bedouin populations. To realize these objectives, applicants were carefully screened in order to ensure suitability to the programme designed to prepare students for kindergarten and primary school teaching positions in Bedouin communities in northern Israel. Beyond satisfying an immediate need for their own well-trained teachers, the far-reaching implications of the programme could affect the general educational level of the Bedouin population.

In order to prepare the groundwork for their academic success, an intensive summer matriculation programme in three areas was provided. Language courses in English and Arabic, as well as mathematics, were designed to reinforce and expand cognitive skills for all students, whether or not they had passed their matriculation exams. Those students who had not passed matriculation exams in one of these subject areas participated in course work designed to strengthen their learning and prepare them for matriculation exams in December.

Although begun modestly in 1991 with students whose objective was primary school teaching, the first class graduated 21 students. With the expansion of the programme to include kindergarten and early childhood education, there are currently (1996) 144 students attending classes. This number includes 44 first and second year students in the early childhood track. All Bedouin students were granted tuition-free education for three years in addition to the summer programme.

This paper study focuses on two aspects relating to Bedouin attitudes toward education:

- Background information pertaining to changes in Bedouin tribal/clan attitudes to education in general, and the effects of socio-economic changes on the status of women, family life and education, in particular.
- The attitudes of the Bedouin student body, their nuclear and extended families to the social and educational changes fostered by the Oranim programme for early childhood and primary school teachers.

General background information

Bedouins are depicted romantically in western literature with a 'Lawrence of Arabia' image which persists in the media. They are often envisioned as nomadic people braving the desert elements, leading their camels and goats across the sandy dunes with their wives and children in tow. Frequently, this picture is presented even more dramatically when their tents are contrasted with the technological, economic and social modernisation enveloping them. As nomads functioning within tribal/clan units, Bedouins have experienced striking transformations resulting from their increasing integration within the Israeli economy. Ever-expanding rural and urban development have also been altering their traditional life styles (Abu Saad 1991: 235). The Bedouin communities are no longer economically insular since the external Israeli economy has affected their employment. Some have retained their traditional economic and organisational patterns to ensure a secure livelihood for their families (Marx and

Schmueli 1984: 9). Others seem to do a little of each, keeping outside jobs while retaining traditional occupations (Medzini 1995: 5; Meir and Barnea 1987: 158).

Along with socio-economic changes, Bedouin attitudes toward education of the young have also undergone radical change since the inception of the State of Israel in 1948. Prior to that, formal schooling was not widely developed in the Bedouin community, since it did not lend itself to the nomadic lifestyle. During the British Mandate (1920-1948) some primary schools were established for the larger Bedouin tribes, particularly in the Negev (southern Israel). Basic elementary skills in reading and writing, with the Koran serving as the text, were taught by teachers whose own education was quite basic in scope (Abu Saad 1991: 236). Although the Compulsory Education Law was passed in 1949, the Bedouin community "was not very interested in the formal education provided by the Israeli Government" (Abu Saad 1991: 236; Meir and Barnea 1987). This began to change as they became more involved in the Israeli economy. However, it was not until the 1970s that logistical and cultural differences were overcome and the populace became more amenable to implementing the Compulsory Education Law. As Bedouin tribes became sedentarised and their communities recognised by the government, they wished to avail themselves of a range of community services including education (Medzini 1995: 5). The apparent gaps in educational services available to them would require the addition of considerable numbers of qualified teachers.

Setting romanticism aside, today approximately 40,000 Bedouins, belonging to 22 tribes, live in the north of Israel. Seventeen tribes with 26,000 members live in permanent government recognised settlements, the rest in non-permanent 'spontaneous' communities (See Table 1, Medzini 1995: 4). They are chiefly

TABLE 1: Officially Recognised Bedouin Villages in the North of Israel – 1995

Aivtin	Ka'abia
Bosmat Tivon	Um al Jenim
Zarzir	Nugidaat
Arab-Shibli	Hagiajara
Rumat Hib	Helf
Wadi Hamam	Mmshit a Zvada
Tuba	Arab al Hwalid
Salama	Su'ad al Kamna
Aramasha	Bir al Maksur

Source: Medzini 1984: 44;
Medzini 1995, unpublished
manuscript: 4.

involved in the construction industry, factory labor and the Israeli armed forces. Bedouins who have earned higher educational degrees, generally return to their villages to educate the younger generation (Rontal 1991: 52).

Bedouin life has been directly affected by changing attitudes to their high birthrate. Although mortality has been on the decline since the nineteen fifties, the birthrate continued to increase into the seventies (Meir 1984; Meir and Barnea 1987: 163). Even though the birthrate has been slowly declining, it still remains extremely high (Levi 1985: 2). In 1985 the birthrate dropped to 4.5% from 5.5% in 1970 (Meir and Barnea 1987: 159). The high birthrate reflects the traditional Bedouin attitude that producing large families is the will of Allah and must not be tampered with. Accordingly, Bedouin families have an average of seven children. That number is similar to the number of offspring in felahin (Moslem farming) families (Central Bureau of Statistics, 1993).

Beyond the theological issue, large numbers of children was an integral part of nomadic existence and proved economically sound. They provided needed manpower for tending the flocks and performing household chores. That children were considered an economic asset in the pre-sedentarised Bedouin society, is evidenced by the Bedouin saying that "*it is possible to satisfactorily feed one-hundred off-spring from one plate.*" Apparently children might be provided for with only minimal outlay, while they contributed to their parents wealth and sustained them in their old-age. This attitude is reinforced by the government policy of child allotments which adds appreciably to their family income (Meir and Ben-David 1992: 87-8).

The high birthrate combined with an increased awareness of Bedouin educational needs have pressured Israeli government agencies to expand educational opportunities for all educational levels. In answer to those needs, schools were constructed, often in anticipation of full sedentarisation of the community. However, their very construction occasionally presented new difficulties pertaining to location. When schools were located so as to service more than one tribal group, tribal antagonisms and competition for prestige became the issue rather than education (Meir 1987; Meir and Barnea 1987: 159). Nevertheless, the Minister of Education, with the cooperation of Bedouin parents and the younger generation, have provided the impetus for educational progress in southern Israel ('Amsha 1985: 20). Similar developments are apparent in northern Israel.

The Hjerat, studied by Eloul, may be viewed as a case in point of social and economic transition since it is the most widely dispersed Bedouin tribe in northern Israel. The majority reside in three permanent villages in the lower Galilee: Bir al-Maksur, al-Mikman and al-Dhmydeh. But the Hjeri are also found in areas extending from Kiryat Shmona in the north, to Hadera in the south and from the

TABLE 2: Population – Annual Average Percentage of Change

Population	1994-1995	1990-1995	1980-1990	1970-1980
Jews	2.4	2.9	1.9	2.4
Arabs and Others	3.8	4.1	3.2	3.8
Thereof: Moslems*	4.0	3.7	3.1	4.2

* Bedouins are included, excluding those living in Southern Israel (Negev).

Source: Reprint from *Statistical Abstract of Israel No. 47-1996: 12, Central Bureau of Statistics.*

Note: Israeli statistics do not separate Bedouins from the rest of the Moslem population in Israel. Therefore, exact statistics are unavailable.

sea of Galilee in the east to Akko (Acre) in the west. The expansion of Hjeri settlement has resulted from the general state of personal and material safety and the tribe's good relations with its Jewish neighbors, particularly with the state authorities (Eloul 1984: 158). Similarly, other tribes have maintained very positive relations with neighboring kibbutzim and villages which serve to encourage genuine give and take of ideas (Medzini 1995: 4, 5).

Positive relations between the Hjeri and government authorities are attributed to their joining the Israeli army as trackers following the Six Day War, 1967, in answer to border violations and terrorist activities of Palestinian guerrillas. The number of army volunteers increased to 30% by 1977. Several reasons account for their recruitment: (1) this type of work suits the traditional image of the Bedouin as a fighter; (2) the salaries were good, especially in comparison with the industrial sector; (3) the life in an army camp, away from the village, allowed youths to enjoy considerable freedom which they could not enjoy otherwise; (4) the young men felt that they achieved something on behalf of the whole tribe in its rivalry with other Bedouin tribes.

In addition, the economic boom following the 1967 war increased work opportunities for young men in construction, industry, and automobile mechanics. Significantly some unmarried and married women started working, albeit under the supervision of a trusted and respected tribesman in order to preserve family honor. *"Nonetheless, the more relaxed inter-sexual behavior in the factory milieu tends to relax these young females' traditional concept of shame and family honor"* (Eloul 1984: 166). Significant numbers of Hjeri are involved in the Bedouin educational programme at Oranim indicating that socio-economic integration has now extended to the area of education.

The status of women, family life and education

Socio-economic changes and educational needs have affected family life and, particularly, the status of women, has been influenced by modernisation. Traditionally, women were limited to the domestic sphere where their lives were considered 'private' and their behaviour 'passive' when compared to men. According to Bedouin custom, their marriages were arranged. But these marriages often involved women in creating affinal links which were economically, socially and politically important (Marx and Schmueli 1984: 86). Within the family, women played an active part in decision-making in matters pertaining to the family and economic matters. Currently, Bedouin women are continuing their drive toward education as well as socio-economic independence (Lewando Hundt 1984: 120-123, Interview with Bedouin teacher, 1995).

Government actions appear to inadvertently assist the woman in her quest for increased independence. The introduction of government pensions and children's allowances have permitted even widowed women with the possibility of refusing a second marriage and continued independent existence for themselves and their children. Whether these independent women are then prepared to extend this freedom from family domination to their children, especially their daughters, is another question. It could be justifiably argued that the widow's refusal to return to her family household or to her husband's agnates is a traditional response to the situation, rather than an indication of the effects of external change (Marx and Shmueli 1984: 90).

The issue of women is especially pertinent to this study in that the majority of Bedouin students in the Oranim programme are women. This factor confirms indications that significant social changes are afoot in the traditionally male-dominated Bedouin community which is now expanding educational opportunities to women students.

Bedouin attitudes to higher education

At Oranim, the introduction of Bedouin students to the college has received considerable attention, especially from the programme coordinator and the faculty involved in their instruction. Bedouin students represent a unique population with special needs different from the wider student body. An answer to their academic needs is provided by the summer programme in English, Arabic and mathematics. In addition, follow-up meetings by faculty members are held at regular intervals to evaluate academic achievements and individual adjustment to the college. Moreover, student progress is assessed together with projections as to their future

TABLE 3: Oranim Teacher Education Programmes for Bedouin Students

Year	Primary School Programme		Early Childhood Programme*	Totals
	Male Students	Female Students	Female Students Only	
1991	11	10		21
1992	17	11		28
1993	7	14	19	40
1994	9	12	23	44
1995	13	18	24	55
1996	10	15	20	45
Totals	67	80	86	233

Total Number of Male Students 67

Total Number of Female Students 166

* The Kindergarten and Early Childhood Programme was initiated in 1993

integration into the teaching profession. During these sessions the issue of high student motivation has constantly been discussed. It became apparent that dramatic changes in attitudes in the broader Bedouin community must have occurred in order to support the educational ambitions of these students. An examination of their family backgrounds and their perceptions of how their families viewed their educational aspirations appeared significant, hence this study.

First year Bedouin students were asked to respond to an attitudes questionnaire in either English or Arabic. The aim of the questionnaire was to explore the educational and occupational background of their respective families and the support they received from their nuclear and extended family. In addition, students were interviewed individually in order to expand and verify the information gleaned from the questionnaires. Fifty-one Oranim students completed the questionnaire and a number of first, second and third year Bedouin students were interviewed informally.

Analysis of student responses to the questionnaire

Student responses to the questionnaire clearly demonstrate the fact that Bedouin society is a society in flux. Although many have preserved the traditional

family trappings by continuing to live in villages, having very large families, and retaining farming and herding occupations, the Bedouin community can no longer be either stereotyped or perceived in nomadic terms. According to student responses, only 17% of their fathers, are regularly engaged in farming and herding, and an additional 20% on a part-time basis only. Most engage in a broad range of occupations from blacksmith to teacher and educational inspector, and from soldier to construction workers and builders. It might be claimed that those who work as soldiers and security guards are merely adapting a traditional Bedouin inclination as a male fighter and protector. But strides toward modernisation are in evidence: 58% of fathers, have received between 6-12 years of education, with one father having pursued studies beyond secondary school level (See Table 4).

On the issue of the role of women, though the traditional lines are still more defined, even here, there is a growing emphasis on education. Students were questioned on three issues: mothers' level of education, family size, and mothers working outside the home. Students responded that 55% of their mothers had attended school, but only 37% received 5 or more years of education. They reported that their families ranged in size from 1-14 children with 91% of their mothers rearing between 5 and 14 children (See Table 6). Considering the size of their families, and that the majority of their children continue to require consistent mothering, it is understandable that only 8% of mothers work outside the home (See Table 4).

TABLE 4: Parents' Education and Occupations

Father's Education		Mother's Education	
Years of schooling	Percent	Years of schooling	Percent
0-5	40	1-4	55
6-12	58	5 or more	37
Father's Occupation		Mother's Education	
Farming & Herding	17	Farming & Herding	23
Part-time farming & herding	20	homemaker	90.7
Occupation outside the village	81	works outside the home	8
no response	2		

TABLE 5: Education of the Non-Bedouin Adult Population – 1995

Number of years of schooling	Jews (percent)	Arabs & others (percent)
0 Years	3.1	8.9
13+	36.0	14.2

Source: Reprinted from Statistical Abstract of Israel, No. 47 – 1996, Central Bureau of Statistics.

TABLE 6: Household – 1995

Average no. of persons per household	
Jews	3.33
Arabs & others	5.09

Source: Reprinted from Statistical Abstract of Israel, No. 47 -- 1996, Central Bureau of Statistics.

1995 Average no. of children in Bedouin household as stated in the questionnaire	8.04
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These results clearly indicate that despite the fact that most parents – 46% women and 24% men respectively – had received only a minimal education as compared to other segments of the Israeli population, this is not what they envision for their offspring or what they are permitting them to acquire. Ninety-seven percent of all students questioned, stated that both their parents wanted them to study and the overwhelming majority of both their maternal and paternal relatives also wanted them to study. Furthermore, if students felt that relatives might oppose their pursuing higher learning they simply were not consulted on the issue (Interview with Bedouin teacher, 1995). Students reported that 63% of their siblings were attending high school. Moreover, 36% of their older brothers and 43% of their older sisters have already pursued post high school education. This percentage only reflects part of the story. In many cases, the respondent was either the oldest, or one of the oldest children in a large family, which indicates that they are the family trailblazers in the field of education. On the issue of what determined their decision to study, only 31% indicated that the tuition-free grant was a consideration; whereas 26% stated that one of their siblings suggested that they study at Oranim. Knowing someone who had studied at Oranim influenced the decision of 37% of all respondents (See Table 7).

TABLE 7: Results of the Questionnaire

Question	Response in Percent
Did your parents want you to study?	97
Did your maternal and paternal relatives?	96
Did your older brothers attend high school?	36
Did your older sisters attend high school?	43
Are any of your younger siblings attending high school now?	63
What determined your decision to study?	
Tuition-free grant	31
One of my siblings made the suggestion	26
I know someone who had studied at Oranim	37

In answer to the question, 'When you complete your studies, do you plan to teach?' 100% affirmed that intention. The overwhelming majority, 84% plan to teach in their village, and the others are open to teach in another village. All students plan to teach after marriage; only one respondent did not expect to teach after her children are born (See Table 8).

An important issue raised by the questionnaire pertained to readiness to become instruments for educational change, once in the field. This was considered relevant, since many studies indicate that despite teacher training and exposure to new pedagogical methods and ideas, many new teachers still revert to the models provided by their pre-college teachers (Calderhead 1989; Alexander 1992). In the case of these students, the question is crucial because many of their primary and secondary school teachers were only minimally qualified for teaching.

Since their English language studies exposed them to new issues and ideas in education, it was deemed relevant to question them as to whether they were prepared to pioneer new methods and ideas. 76% of the respondents maintained that the English lessons gave them new teaching ideas. Most indicated their positive intentions to adopting the new educational ideas and information learned in the English programme. 67% stated that they would definitely adopt the ideas. However, when questioned further, 16% stated that they would adopt new ideas if other teachers also used new ideas. A further instance of pragmatism was indicated by responses to the question, 'If my principal agrees, then I will adopt new ideas.' 36% responded positively. Only 22% believed adopting new ideas could be problematic, whereas most felt it would not (See Table 8).

TABLE 8: Students responses on how they envision their professional future

Question	Response in Percent
Do you plan to teach after graduation?	100
Do you plan to teach in your village?	84
Do you plan to teach after you marry?	100
Did English lessons give you new ideas for teaching?	76
I would definitely adopt these new ideas	67
I would adopt new ideas if other teachers also did	16
I would adopt new ideas if my principal agreed	36
I believe adopting new ideas would be problematic	22

Discussion and conclusions

The Bedouin community in the north of Israel has gradually become integrated into the social and economic life of Israel. Sedentarization and official recognition of their villages have contributed to bringing the Bedouin communities into closer contact with the general population. Moreover, educational and social services, found in most Israeli communities, have become available to Bedouins with government recognition of their villages. Army service is further evidence of their involvement in Israeli life. All of these factors have helped produce changes in the traditional life-style and unlocked new occupational opportunities.

The survey of family background at the beginning of this study focused attention on the contrast between the educational and occupational levels of the parents' generation as compared with those of the students attending the Oranim teacher education programme for Bedouin students. This comparison revealed an apparent change in attitudes toward higher education in the Bedouin communities in the north of Israel.

A numerical analysis of the students involved in the Oranim College teacher-training programme highlights this attitude transformation. 144 students are currently (1996) enrolled in the three year programme for early childhood and primary school teachers at Oranim. One hundred and twelve women and thirty-two men comprise the student body. Sixty-seven women are preparing to become early childhood and kindergarten teachers. The preponderance of female students in this programme clearly indicates a willingness on the part of the Bedouin community to have at least some of their women educated and ultimately achieve professional status.

According to the questionnaire, students indicated that their parents were overwhelmingly in favor of their pursuing higher education. Moreover, both paternal and maternal relatives also favored their enrollment in the programme. This, despite the fact that western-style education instantly presents the Bedouin student with the dilemma of replacing accepted collective tribal values of belongingness and group loyalty with personal academic achievement (Discussions with faculty members, 1995, Meir and Barnea 1987: 159).

How does a traditional clan-oriented society avail its male and female youngsters with the opportunities and temptations for exposure to education within educational institutions which are both liberal and open? What impels this readiness to perhaps endanger their conservative socio-religious structure? According to student responses to the questionnaire and informal interviews with second and third year students, education is apparently considered so significant, so absolutely necessary, that some traditional norms are set aside while others are adopted and even inculcated into the society. Education in general, and higher education for both male and female youngsters have become a new Bedouin norm. Apparently, these educational changes are part of other the social changes already in motion indicated by other factors such as living in settled communities, increased urbanization and materialism. Could this apparent openness have other motivations? Could aspirations for socio-economic and political equality within the broader Israeli community be the overriding motivation for extending educational opportunities to the young? Did socio-economic and political forces operating in the communities mean an end to self-imposed group segregation, at least in certain fields?

Would education provide an answer to the challenges of Islamic fundamentalism, conflicts within the Bedouin community (religiosity versus secularism), nationalistic awakening, Palestinianisation of the Bedouin community? Or, would education merely exacerbate these conflicts? Does the governmental policy of offering a three year stipend for academic study for male students enlisting voluntarily in the army and a similar stipend for female students without military obligations, indicate a readiness to further extend political and economic equality to the Bedouin community? Or, is it an effort to counter the effects of Islamisation and Palestinianisation on the Bedouin community and ensure their continuing loyalty? Does it indicate a desire to right a political wrong by developing educated Bedouin cadres to educate the young within their own community rather than relying upon Palestinian Arab teachers who would then continue to infuse the young with radical Islamic and/or nationalistic ideas and training?

According to the stated aims of the programme, the government has recognised the need to staff Bedouin schools with Bedouin teachers. This

programme provides an appropriate answer to the staffing issue. Since significant numbers of the local school teaching staffs have been Arabs from northern and central Israel, higher educational programmes, would alter the numerical balance between local Bedouin teachers and Arab teachers, now at about 50%. Despite their religious similarity, there are traditional historic tensions between Arabs and Bedouins which were exacerbated by the staffing issue (Interviews with School Principals, 1996; Meir and Barnea 1987: 166). Also, it would be a positive move toward building mutual respect between Arab and Bedouin teaching staffs. Thus, the increase in qualified Bedouin teachers, begun in the nineteen eighties, would be improved as result of the Oranim programme. Moreover, this would invite ethnic and cultural solidarity within the Bedouin community, and continue to encourage parent-teacher collaboration on the issues of child development and clan advancement (Meir, 1985; Meir and Barnea 1987: 166).

Despite the fact that the Bedouins are viewed by the Israeli public in a positive light, the Bedouins themselves have indicated that their main objectives in the future will be an active involvement in attaining civil and political equality. Furthermore, they maintain that their loyalty to the country is attested to by their induction and service in the Israeli army. They perceive their army service, as the means for promoting the cause of egalitarianism as well as achieving economic advancement (Ben David 1991: 95).

If these and similar programmes continue to fulfil the needs of the Bedouin community for increased equality and educational advancement, they would prove that the Israeli government is providing tangible rewards for their demonstrated loyalty. Moreover, this may be the correct means of counteracting Islamic Fundamentalism and political radicalisation. Certainly, the enrollment of significant numbers of female students, attaining academic goals, could counter the effects of religious extremism, unless they prove to be more vulnerable to religious inculcation and political radicalism.

Facing these young people, year after year, as they enter Oranim, I am encouraged by their motivation for learning. Yet a sense of excitement, beyond that of other entering freshman classes permeates the atmosphere. They are aware that many of their mothers are either illiterate or have had a limited education. They understand that although their fathers have generally had more education than their mothers, this, in itself is not an adequate standard for themselves. They aspire to new heights of academic achievement far beyond those of their parents, for themselves and their siblings. Discussions with these students indicate that they clearly comprehend the process when they compare the education of their grandparents, parents and the opportunities which they have secured. Moreover, the socio-economic changes which continue to occur during their lifetimes transcend issues of literacy. They perceive the reality that their grandparents and

some of their parents engaged in traditional occupations of herding and farming and were nomads living in tents. Yet, in contrast to their elders, they will attend college, acquire a western-style education and profession, and share these benefits with the inhabitants of their village.

Since they are exposed to a liberal Israeli environment, this generates individual desires for educational, social and professional choices. A number of graduates of the programmes have already enrolled in the newly instituted fourth year programme at Oranim, which grants a Bachelors' of Education degree, in addition to a teaching certificate. Perhaps some will pursue their studies toward even more advanced degrees.

The overwhelming majority indicated intentions of teaching after marriage and children. Obviously these intentions have further ramifications: modification of traditional norms involved in choosing their mates within the framework of the Bedouin family. Formerly, a young woman who refused to accept the marital match arranged by the clan was declared rebellious, jeopardized her family honor and, was in great physical danger. (Ronale 1991: 54). Today, many young people cautiously choose a potential mate, but are careful to get parental approval for their own choices (Interview with Bedouin teacher, 1995). Often traditional pre-marital agreements are modified, stipulating that the girl will continue her education, will be able to work after marriage and even after children. Sometimes, the fiancé will support her educational objectives in every way, even financially. How is all this possible?

Education has become such a concrete value that the college educated girl has become highly valued by both her nuclear and extended family. This is shown by the statistics of the teacher-training programme. Moreover, these findings reveal that if it were felt that members of the extended family might oppose the girls' education, they would simply not be consulted (Interview with Bedouin teacher, 1995). Obviously, the overwhelming family approval indicated in the questionnaire, attests to the trust and confidence on the part of parents and tribal elders. However, should this trust violate tribal/clan norms, including excessive sexual freedom, this would bring disgrace to the programme and Bedouin community.

The question of higher education for women is obviously directly tied into the birthrate issue. If child-bearing continues to be a matter of economics, prestige and honor for both the couple and clan, the educational level of women will invariably be thwarted. However, the attitude toward childbearing has been somewhat modified as result of pressures by mothers to improve and brighten their daughters' futures (Lewando-Hundt 1980: 83-124). In fact, the number of girls receiving primary school education had increased by nearly 40% by 1986. This is in part based on a growing male preference for better educated mates (Interview

with Bedouin teacher, 1996; Meir and Barnea 1987: 162-163). Thus, the education of girls has begun to symbolise yet another step toward modernisation (Meir 1987: 163). However, this may merely represent retaining traditional underpinnings with only the superficial dressing of modernity, when, actually it is a case of the cultural transference of dowry demands from camels to college education.

The movement toward higher education could have vast implications in terms of male/female relationships within the family and tribal organisation. Although all students require parental support for academic pursuits, whether this be financial and/or emotional sustenance, this is even more critical for women. This issue was explored in terms of parental and clan attitudes toward supporting the individual student's desire for education. The changing social attitudes, which encourage education in general, and of women in particular, indicate a family and tribal/clan willingness to permit these modifications. Surely, granting young women the opportunity to study at liberal Israeli educational institutions expose these women to westernized attitudes and ideas.

Beyond the need to introduce educated teachers into the Bedouin community, there is also a particular need to appoint more female Bedouin teachers to the teaching staffs. Since the sexes are separated in the Bedouin community, female students attending secondary school are in a difficult situation. *"They find themselves in an almost completely male environment, which is an unfamiliar situation for them. Social norms forbid them to establish close relationships with male teachers, thus restricting their learning opportunities"* (Abu Saad 1991: 240). This difficulty should be mitigated as more qualified female graduates from Oranim enter the educational system.

The exposure of segments of the Bedouin community to varied aspects of modernisation, poses ever-increasing questions on both the social and educational plane. Is the educated Bedouin woman not limited in her choice of spouse by the very fact of her being more educated than a potential husband? Are Bedouin men prepared to marry women with more education than they have? As more educated working women contribute to the family's financial stability, won't they have more input in family decision-making? In some cases, the husband might have to assume traditionally female-held roles, such as child-care, food preparation and other domestic chores. Once this issue is open for discussion, it can lead anywhere.

How will the Bedouin family resolve the conflict with Moslem family values as women enter the teaching profession? Will not this entail confronting issues of limiting family size? Nursery schools and kindergarten programmes have been part of Bedouin village scene just as it is part of any Israeli community, so that part of the infrastructure for liberating the woman is already in place. Care of the elderly and infirm have always been part of the woman's responsibilities. Will we now see centers for the care of these dependent groups as more women teach or

are involved in other professions? With increased education, we can assume that intra-group marriages will decline as result of an increased awareness of genetics. How will all of these factors affect the traditional Bedouin attitudes and relations? In addition to the changes stimulated by educational advancement, other innovations appear on the horizon. Recently, a 15 woman advisory council was formed to advise the mayor and town council on issues pertaining to women and their status in Tuba Village of northern Israel. Explaining his agreement with this dramatic move, the mayor said, "*There have been advances in technology, computers and fashion. It is no secret that young women are aware of the progress and advancement happening around them, which I would term adaptation. This is certainly in keeping with the Jewish environment*" (Ronale 1991: 54).

Lest the picture of Bedouin female emancipation be viewed too positively, Meir and Barnea indicated that statistics of girls educational opportunities are more limited than appear on the surface. In many traditional families girls are removed from school between the sixth and eighth grades, as they approach marriageable age, to help with household chores and prevent untoward contact with males (Interview with the Coordinator of the Bedouin programme, 1995; Meir and Barnea 1987: 164). This phenomenon exists in the non-recognised, more remote villages. Hopefully, the future integration of college educated Bedouins into the village schools will persuade these conservative parents to allow their daughters to remain in school.

Surely many questions have been raised here, some remain unanswered. But the mere posing of these questions attests to the unfolding changes which the Bedouin community faces. All students interviewed indicated that the process of educational change is symptomatic of their motivations to achieve greater economic and political equality with the majority Jewish population in Israel. Although they feel that Bedouin insularity no longer exists, they still wish to preserve their unique cultural values. However, these students are uncertain as to which values will be sacrificed to the march of progress.

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