

proper utilization of his household member's labour (including the labour of his womenfolk and children) throughout the year so that he can derive optimum benefits from the opportunities for wage labour without, at the same time, neglecting his farm totally. Since there are a certain number of constraints limiting the participation of women (modesty code, etc.) and children (education) in wage labour outside the village, it is the household's elder sons who are the first subjects for release in response to wage labour opportunities. Subsequently the 16 years' Israeli occupation of the West Bank have seen increased participation by women and children in certain aspects of the agricultural process which have been previously the domain of the men; for instance the shaking of branches and picking from the tree top (jadd), as opposed to collecting the olives from the ground, is now often performed by women and older people. Women are also increasingly observed handling the plough -- previously a man's preserve.⁵

On the other hand, the size of the family farm may encourage the head of the peasant household to keep one or more of his sons to work on the farm. The process of agricultural production in olive orchards, and, more important, its bi-annual cycle, lends itself conveniently to the demand for casual labour outside the village. However, there are basic tasks which have to be done if the orchard is to maintain reasonable productivity. These are ploughing (at least twice a year -- March and April); weeding (April, May); pruning (September); and fertilization.⁶ The picking season begins in September and continues throughout October and November. During these months also household members participate in taking the olives to the press and in marketing the oil.