

At any rate the possibility of finding landholders willing to sell, or exchange, their fragments for that purpose is remote -- given their number and legal procedures involved. At best J.H.M. can only hope that the residential built-up area of the village will extend in the direction of his own property, driving its real estate value upwards.

What do we conclude from this? The degree of plot fragmentation in Natufa has reached an extent where, for the absolute majority of its landowners, effective land utilization for agricultural purposes is futile, given the size of fragments, the terrain, and the limited possibilities inherent in mechanizing dry farm-land. Whatever yields are extracted from rugged soil is done through related households joining together and leasing their plots to hired croppers, or through the marginal and seasonal use of their family labour. In 1974, 57 percent of landowning households in Natufa (99 households) claimed they crop their land in this joint manner (NHS, 1974:23).

These limitations in land utilization are rooted as much in the juridical form of ownership as they are in demography and ecology. Thus, a radical introduction of land reform measures is unlikely, in my opinion, to ameliorate the condition of Natufa farmers or to reverse the process of depeasantisation. The land settlement of 1952-1956 did enhance the rights of female household members, but only at the cost of furthering the trend towards fragmentation and commoditization of land as property.

Fathers & Sons: Changes in Village Occupational Structure

The decline of involvement in agriculture has given rise to a new diversified social structure which has undergone crucial changes during the last few decades. The magnitude of this change can be seen in the occupational changes in the life of three generations of Natufa residents.