

The success of the Zbeidat project has not been an example of "triumph of the will" but was contingent on two separate forces. One was the availability of capital investment extended, in this case, by the voluntary agency (which subsidized 25 percent of the total expenses), towards the cost of an alternative technological reorganization of agriculture.

The second necessary factor was the presence of a homogeneous community, based on a unified tribal kinship system in this case, which was able to respond collectively to the technological introduction. Had these conditions not been met, the irrigation technology would probably have been introduced anyway (as the case in Jiftlek and the Southern Ghors clearly attest) but by the landlord. In that case, the uneven and exploitative relationship between the absentee owners and peasant-sharecroppers would have been further accentuated, in favour of the former. In all likelihood, Zbeidat disintegration as a peasant community would not have been halted and internal differentiation would have proceeded in the direction of proletarianization.

But the success of Zbeidat farmers in improving their bargaining power should not obscure two long-term obstacles that face them today. First, how are they to invest their surplus disposable income? Second, how are they going to organize themselves in such a way as to overcome the problems of marketing that emerged from the increased (and earlier) harvest?

In a word, both the traditional, consensus-based decision making leadership and the individual peasant household in Zbeidat are now challenged by having to face the demands of the external world under changed circumstances.