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Survey of Bedouin Schools in the Negev

by (in alphabetical order)

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INTRODUCTION

More than 100,000 Bedouin live in the Negev and account for about one-fourth of the region's population. Bedouin have inhabited the Negev since the fifth century C.E. (Maddrell, 1990). They were traditionally organized in nomadic or semi-nomadic tribes that earned their livelihood from animal husbandry (sheep, goats, and camels) and seasonal agriculture (Shimoni, 1947).

Prior to 1948, the Negev Bedouin population was estimated at 65,000-90,000 (Falah, 1989; Maddrell, 1990). During and after the War of Independence (1948), most of these Bedouin became refugees in neighboring Arab countries (Egypt and Jordan) and the Gaza Strip. According to the 1952 census, only about 11,000 Bedouin remained in the Negev (Marx, 1967; Falah, 1989). This remnant was subsequently removed from its lands and, during its years under Israel military rule (1948-1966), was confined to "restricted zones" set aside for them in the northern Negev (Marx, 1967; Lustick, 1980; Falah, 1989). The loss of pasture and farmland effected a radical transformation in the traditional Bedouin way of life (Lustick, 1980; Maddrell, 1990). A spontaneous process of sedentarization ensued at this time (Falah, 1985, 1989).

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Government of Israel began to implement plans to resettle the Negev Bedouin in seven urban communities -- Rahat, Tel Sheva, 'Aro'er, Kuseifeh, Segev Shalom, Hura, and Lakia. These settlements were established in order to permit efficient provision of services and to concentrate the Bedouin in permanent localities, where they could no longer cultivate, settle, and/or claim ownership of their expropriated lands (Hazleton, 1980). The delivery of services (running water, electricity, paved roads, public transport, schools, community clinics, telephone service, and so on) was an incentive meant to lure Bedouin to the government-sponsored settlements. Concurrently, the government withheld recognition and services from most of the spontaneous settlements (Ben-David 1991). The sedentarization process and the loss of traditional sources of livelihood made the Negev Bedouin increasingly dependent on the Israeli labor market. However, the sedentarization program did not succeed in full. As of 1992, only 45 percent of Bedouin dwelt in the planned settlements; the majority, 55 percent, continued to live in spontaneous localities (Ben-David, 1993).

However "planned" they may be, the permanent settlements lack economic infrastructure and jobs (Ben-David, 1993) because Israel's national priorities are such that most development resources are allocated to Jewish localities (Lustick, 1980; Al-Haj, 1990). The permanent Bedouin settlements have an unemployment rate of 20 percent, the highest in the country. Only 30 percent of the labor force have a regular income; 45 percent work at random jobs. About 80 percent of persons employed spend up to five days away from home at jobs in central Israel (Ben-David, 1991).

General Background⁸

The sociohistorical background of the Negev Bedouin and the extreme changes that occurred in their way of life have had a major impact on their educational achievements. Schools hardly developed in the Bedouin community, because such institutions were poorly suited to the nomadic or semi-nomadic way of life. The first schools took shape in the large Bedouin tribes under the British Mandate (1921-1948) but, practically speaking, only the sons of wealthy sheiks had access to formal education (Abu-Saad, 1991; Berman, 1967). In addition to these schools, a small number "elder teachers" (*khutiba'a*) in the Negev imparted basic literacy skills but nothing more. The Qur'an was their textbook, and the learning process ended when the entire book had been read (Abu-Saad, 1991). Very few Bedouin were literate and, because survival under the harsh conditions of nomadic or semi-nomadic life required different skills, literacy held low priority for many years. The establishment of the State of Israel transformed the lives of the Negev Bedouin and made the continuation of their traditional ways untenable. The Bedouin became a landless minority in a Western-oriented country. This transition made formal education a necessity.

The Compulsory Education Law, enacted shortly after the State of Israel had been established, entitled every child to free primary schooling and made education between age six and thirteen compulsory. The state was required to provide personnel, pay wages, create regular positions, and supply a curriculum. However, the Israeli education authorities -- like those who

⁸Based on Abu-Saad, 1995.

had ruled the Bedouin previously -- did not perceive this community as an integral part of society and, consequently, provided it with scanty education services (Swirski, 1990).

Because of this official indifference, coupled with disinterest in education within the Bedouin community itself, the education system of the Negev Bedouin remained undeveloped long after the Compulsory Education Law was enacted. During the military government period, most schools had only four grades and their average enrollment was 40 (Abu-Saad, 1995). Attendance was poor and no serious effort was made to enforce the Compulsory Education Law. In 1956, for example, only 350 Bedouin were enrolled in schools, out of a school-age population of 2,000. At the end of that school year, only 220 (all boys) were still enrolled -- a dropout rate of 37 percent for the year (Waschitz, 1957; Swirski, 1990). The issue of girls' enrollment was especially problematic. Traditional Bedouin society did not allow women to leave the extended family surroundings. To avoid risking their honor, families did not allow daughters to venture out alone and encounter boys from other families and tribes (Maddrell, 1990). Thus Bedouin were more reluctant to enroll their daughters in school than they were their sons, especially when the schools were far from home.

During the military government period, youngsters who wished to advance to secondary studies were referred to schools in Arab communities in northern Israel. This goal was beyond the reach of all but a few, because tuition was steep and permission to leave the area was hard to obtain. The military government regulations kept the Arab population under curfew and required special permits for Arabs who wished to leave their villages for work, education, commerce, and other purposes (Mar'i, 1978; Rudge, 1988).

Bedouin enrollment remained low throughout this time. The situation did not begin to change until 1966, when the military government and the movement restrictions were abolished. The elimination of the military government enabled Negev Bedouin to interact with Arabs in northern Israel and the "triangle," where the education system was more firmly established. Concurrently, as Negev Bedouin became increasingly exposed to life in the Jewish sector and immersed in its economy, the better they understood the importance of formal education in their adjustment to the new way of life (Abu-Saad, 1985).

After the 1967 war, Negev Bedouin re-established relations with the relatives and fellow tribespersons in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip from whom they had been separated since

1948. They discovered that many of their kin in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip had obtained formal education and worked as teachers, lawyers, doctors, and other professionals, while they had almost no access to formal education and remained illiterate for the most part (Abu-Saad, 1991). They also encountered educated Bedouin women in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, a phenomenon hardly known among Bedouin women in the Negev. Inter-marriage between members of the previously separated Bedouin groups brought educated women from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to the Negev (Abu-Saad, 1985; Ben-David, 1990). These interrelations had a decisive impact on the dynamic of the Bedouin community and led to an increase in school enrollment of girls as well as boys (Abu-Saad, 1991).

As the demand for education grew, the government opened more schools and brought more Bedouin children into the orbit of free education. The Ministry of Education and Culture established schools for all Bedouin tribes by the late 1960s, and the first high school for Negev Bedouin was founded in 1969 (Reichel, Neumann, and Abu-Saad, 1987). In 1972, the Free Compulsory Education Law was expanded to grades nine and ten, to include the 14-15 age cohort (Mar'i, 1978). In the late 1970s, another two high schools were established in government-sponsored settlements.

The number of Bedouin schools and pupils increased over time. In 1993, 23,276 Negev Bedouin were enrolled in 37 schools -- 29 primary, 3 junior-high, 2 comprehensive (grades 7-12), 2 high schools (grades 9-12), and one vocational school (the Amal apprenticeship center) that offered a combined work-study curriculum that did not lead to matriculation (Ministry of Education, Southern District, 1993). In 1994, enrollment increased to 24,790 and the number of schools to 38 (Ben-David, 1994). However, considering the potential of formal education in facilitating this traditional minority's successful adjustment to the new way of life and expediting its full integration into Israeli society, the education system did not receive the extent of support and attention warranted.

The Negev Bedouin schools faced several difficulties that kept them from improving their education services. First, they were short on staff positions and equipment, especially in the "unplanned" tribal settlements, which, not being among the seven created by the government, were regarded by the government as temporary. In the 1992/93 school year, there were ten schools in such settlements, all primary, as against 28 in the permanent settlements. The schools

in these spontaneous settlements had almost no equipment and teaching aids, scanty budgets, few facilities, and inadequate buildings and furnishings. Services and facilities such as audiovisual aids, computers, laboratories, and sports equipment were sometimes unavailable. Most of these Bedouin schools are located in structures that have insufficient classroom and office space and lack running water and electricity, even though some are near water mains and power lines. The buildings are neither expanded nor properly maintained.

This situation is partly the result of a government policy that seeks to force the Bedouin to move to the permanent settlements (Meir, 1986; Abu-Saad, 1995). Although the government is legally required to give Bedouin children an education, it disregards this obligation and uses the education system as a means to induce the Bedouin to relocate to the permanent settlements.

Evidence of this is the superior physical conditions in schools in permanent localities. Most of these schools are situated in modern buildings that have running water and electricity. However, although the physical conditions are better here than in the schools in temporary localities, laboratories and other teaching aids are in short supply in these schools, too. Furthermore, most of the schools are overcrowded because development has not kept up with the growth of population and enrollment (Abu-Saad, 1991; Rahat Education Department 1993). The Negev Bedouin birth rate is one of the highest in the world at 6.5 percent, and 56 percent of the population is under the age of fourteen (Roth, 1989). Another inhibiting factor in the development of the education system is the teaching staff. Until 1976, an absolute majority of teachers in Bedouin schools were recruited from Arab villages in northern Israel, because the Bedouin community was unable to provide its own. Today, a small majority of the teachers in the Bedouin education system -- still only 60 percent -- are Bedouin; the other teachers come from elsewhere (Ministry of Education, Southern District, 1993).

The Negev Bedouin do not produce enough teachers; the Arabs in the north turn out too many. To cope with this problem, the Ministry of Education and Culture requires Arabs with teaching certificates to spend several years working in Bedouin schools after they complete their studies. This arrangement is far from ideal; while it does solve partly the problem of school personnel, it causes a high rate of teacher turnover. Furthermore, these are beginning teachers. After they accrue several years of teaching experience, they return to their villages in the north.

The local Bedouin teachers are more stable as a group but are less educated. Most were hired by the Ministry of Education at a time when teachers were in seriously short supply. Few have more than a high-school education. The situation has improved since 1976, when the Kaye Teachers' College in Beersheva inaugurated a separate teacher-training program for Bedouin. The Bedouin program at Kaye turns out only 30-35 teachers per year, not enough to meet the natural growth of the student population, let alone to increase the proportion of local teachers (Abu-Saad, 1995). According to Ministry of Education data for 1992, 19 percent of teachers in Bedouin schools are unqualified (Ministry of Education, Southern District, 1992). Few women teach in Negev Bedouin schools, and most of those who do are not Bedouin. Most women teach in the lower grades; all the kindergarten staff are women. The older the pupils are, the fewer women teachers they have. According to the traditional gender roles, which are still entrenched in Bedouin society, men work outside the home and support the family while women remain at home. Moreover, women are perceived as lacking the authority needed to educate children. Thus, their involvement in the teaching profession has not been well received. Mar'i explains, "In view of the values and traditions that place women in an inferior status, even the small proportion of women teachers creates a state of cultural contradiction" (Mar'i, 1978). In a society that keeps men and women apart, high-school girls face a new situation: an encounter with a largely masculine environment. The lack of professionally trained local teachers and the lack of Bedouin women teachers are two of the most serious dilemmas in the Bedouin education system.

Responsibility for the Negev Bedouin schools is entrusted to two general supervisors, one a Negev Bedouin who works full time, the other an Arab from the north who holds a half-time position. These two officials administer all supervisory services in all Bedouin schools in the Southern District. When the Arab Education Department was dismantled in 1984, no organizational efforts were made to integrate the Arab schools into the corresponding district offices of the Ministry of Education. Thus, although the Bedouin education system is officially an integral part of the Southern District, it does not receive a commensurate share of services. All of the specialized supervisors in charge of teaching subjects such as science, arithmetic, languages, and physical education, from primary up to high school, are Jewish, and they hardly ever visit the Bedouin schools (Abu-Saad, 1995).

Educators in the Bedouin system find themselves in a situation of conflict. The schools are institutions that attempt to introduce Western values into a traditional society. The emphasis on getting ahead, contrary to the value of tribal cohesion, represents a major change in the Bedouin way of life. While the home stresses traditional concepts, the schools present their pupils with a different and sometimes contradictory set of norms. The burden of bridging the gap between the clashing roles that the students are to play falls on the teachers and the school administrative staff. In most cases, relations between the schools and parents and community are tenuous. Many studies have demonstrated the contribution of parent involvement to positive educational outcomes such as high scholastic achievements (Henderson, 1987; Haynes, Comer, and Hamilton-Lee, 1989), higher self-esteem (Cochran, 1987), school attendance (Haynes et al., 1989), positive pupil behavior and attitudes (Becher, 1984), willingness to do homework (Rich, 1988), and encouraging the aspirations of parents and students to acquire higher education (McDill, Rigsby, and Meyers, 1969). To bridge the gap between school and community, it has been found essential to integrate parents into the education system.

These problems have made the Negev Bedouin schools less able to retain and educate their pupils. Consequently, the schools have a very high dropout rate: Education Ministry data show that 56 percent of boys and 55 percent of girls left school between grades eight and twelve - a painfully high rate even assuming that some of these students had moved to localities in northern Israel.

Table 1: Dropout Rate of Bedouin Boys and Girls, 1988/89-1992/93

Grade	Boys (N)	Dropout rate	Girls (N)	Dropout rate
8	765	--	395	--
9	691	10%	284	28%
10	514	26%	226	20%
11	403	22%	199	12%
12	336	17%	177	11%

Source: Abu-Saad, 1995: 158

The poor scholastic achievements in the Bedouin schools constitute a negative incentive to remain in the school. In the 1991/92 school year, 38 percent of Jewish seventeen-year-olds and

16 percent of Arabs in this age group earned matriculation certificates (Sprinzak, Bar, and Levy-Mazlom, 1995). The proportion of Negev Bedouin who did so was even lower. Young Bedouin have no access to programs designed to increase their participation in higher education. In 1982, the Katsav Committee recommended raising university tuition, following which tuition was indeed raised but Jewish students were compensated by receiving "army veteran" stipends for which Arab students, including Bedouin, are not eligible. (Bedouin who serve in the army lack scholastic credentials that would admit them to higher education.) The marginality of Bedouin society in Israel, the low economic status of this population group, and the absence of any official encouragement have contributed to keeping the scholastic achievements of young Bedouin the lowest in the country.

Another factor that inhibits Bedouin scholastic achievements is the absence of Bedouin educators at the high echelons of the Ministry of Education and Culture, where decisions in policy, curricula, and management of Ministry resources are made (Abu-Saad, 1991).

THE SURVEY

The foregoing discussion provides the background for understanding the findings of the survey on the Negev Bedouin schools, conducted among principals and teachers who work in these schools. The purpose of the survey was to elucidate the problems involved in providing education services, recruiting and training teachers, developing curricula and content relevant to the students' lives, as well to reveal the nature of school-community relations. Another purpose was to document the physical conditions in Bedouin schools in both temporary and permanent settlements.

The overarching goal of the survey is to assist Bedouin officials and other policymakers to draw conclusions that may lead to the formulation of a comprehensive plan to improve and enhance the education system in Negev Bedouin communities.

Methodology

Instruments

The authors of the survey prepared two questionnaires, one for principals and one for teachers. The teachers' questionnaire was composed of closed questions only; most of the questions on the principals' questionnaire were closed, but several were open-ended. The three researchers distributed the questionnaires among all principals and teachers in the schools in the sample and told the participants why the survey was being conducted. Some of the principals and teachers filled out the questionnaires at school; others took them home and returned them to the researchers later.

Sample

The sample included 19 of 37 schools in Negev Bedouin localities in the 1993/94 school year. The schools represented various cross-sections of the Negev Bedouin community (temporary and permanent settlements) and types of schools (primary, junior-high, and secondary). The sample in each category was random; it included all five high schools, three junior-highs, and eleven

primary schools. The questionnaires were administered to 19 principals (51 percent of all principals in Negev Bedouin schools) and 473 teachers (38 percent of all teachers). The survey was conducted between March and June of 1994.

Of the 473 questionnaires handed out to teachers, 423 (87 percent) were returned. Of the 19 questionnaires handed out to principals, 17 (89 percent) were returned. Despite numerous reminders, two principals who had been given questionnaires did not fill them out.

Data Analysis

The data were subjected to a frequency analysis, and all the answers were differentiated by types of schools (primary, junior-high, academic secondary, vocational secondary) and type of settlement (permanent or temporary).

THE PRINCIPALS

Seventeen of the 19 principals in the sample returned the questionnaires. Eleven of the 17 were principals of primary schools, two of junior-high schools, and four of high schools. The answers were categorized by level of school -- primary, junior-high, and high.

Success on Matriculation Exams

The proportion of students entitled to a matriculation certificate is lower among Arabs than among Jews and lowest of all among Bedouin. The rate in 1993, as a proportion of the relevant age group, was 37.5 among the Jews, only 14.8 percent among the Arabs (Ministry of Education, 1995), and even lower among the Negev Bedouin. The Ministry of Education does not release separate data on matriculation-certificate eligibility among the Negev Bedouin; in the absence of such figures, the survey findings provide a partial picture of the achievements of Negev Bedouin students.

The four high-school principals who took part in the survey were asked how many of their twelfth-grade students took the matriculation exams and how many succeeded in obtaining a certificate in the three years preceding the survey. One of the principals explained that none of his students had taken matriculation exams before the end of the 1993/94 school year. The replies of the other three principals are presented in the following table.

Table 2: Twelfth-Grade Students Who Took Matriculation Exams in 1990-1993

School year		Number of students from each school			Total
		School A	School B	School C	
1990/91	Tested	101	0	30	131
	Matriculated	6 5.9%	0	13 43%	19 15%
1991/92	Tested	65	0	20	85
	Matriculated	28 43%	0	7 35%	35 41%
1992/93	Tested	70	12	22	104
	Matriculated	45 64%	8 67%	15 68%	68 65%

The table shows the difference between the number of students who take the matriculation exams and the number who pass them. In the 1990/91 school year, 101 students at School A took the exams but only six (5.9 percent) passed. At School C, 30 took the exams and 13 (43 percent) passed. These figures do not include students who did not take the exams at all or who dropped out before twelfth grade. Although the data for the 1991/92 school year seem to show considerable improvement, the number of students taking the exams actually decreased from 131 to 85. There were more candidates in 1992/93 mainly because School B began to prepare students for matriculation that year, not because the other two schools prepared more candidates. It is worth noting, however, that the number of successful matriculates doubled between 1991/92 and 1992/93.

The findings of our survey corroborate those of Ben-David (Ben-David, 1994), who found that although the number of Bedouin students studying for matriculation increased between 1987/88 and 1991/92, the proportion of those taking the full battery of exams decreased sharply, from 51 percent to 28 percent. The number of students of matriculation age rose from 183 in 1987/88 to 360 in 1989/90 and 407 in 1991/92.

The reason that many 12th graders do not take the exams is the strong inclination of principals to refer only students who have strong prospects of success. This reflects the principals' wish to paint a favorable portrait of their school and thereby enhance its prestige. The Ministry of Education reinforces this situation by allowing schools to decide who may take the matriculation exams -- and who may not -- without giving parents a role in making the decisions.

Table 3: Twelfth-Grade Students Who Took Matriculation Exams in Mathematics, English, Arabic, and Hebrew (1990-1993)

Subject Years	Mathematics		English		Arabic		Hebrew		Total
	3 units	4 units	3 units	4 units	3 units	4 units	3 units	4 units	
1990/91	87	39	96	34	109	39	4	154	562
1991/92	78	29	75	32	69	37	9	102	438
1992/93	106	6	82	26	70	45	0	113	448

- * The numbers pertain to the total number of students who took matriculation exams in these subjects, in all three high schools in the sample that referred students to the matriculation exams in the years reviewed.
- ** All the respondents noted that their students had attempted matriculation only on the level of three and four study units, except for six who took the matriculation exam in Arabic in 1990/91 on the level of five units, nine who took the Hebrew exam on the two-unit level in 1991/92, and four who took the Hebrew exam on the two-unit level in 1990/91.

When we examine the level of the matriculation certificate as well as the rate of success on the exams, we find a retreat rather than an advance. In mathematics, English, and Arabic, the number of students tested on the four-unit level is decreasing, as is the number of students tested at the three-unit level in English and Hebrew. Only in Arabic has there been a slight upturn in the number of students tested on the level of four units and a concurrent decrease in the number of those tested at the three-unit level.

Physical Conditions

The survey elicits a picture of unfavorable learning conditions in Bedouin schools. Two primary schools, both located in temporary settlements, lack electricity. When asked about their classrooms, the principals enumerated 101 classrooms in prefabricated structures, 46 in provisional structures, 29 in metal sheds, and only 150 in standard buildings. The fact that nearly 25 percent of classrooms are in temporary structures or sheds is evidence of inadequate infrastructure in the Negev Bedouin schools. Furthermore, prefabricated classrooms were found not only in schools in temporary localities but also in permanent settlements.

As for lavatories, two primary-school principals reported that the lavatories in their schools did not have running water, and one principal stated that his school had no lavatories at all.

Table 4: Types of Buildings

School Level	Number of classrooms, by type of building			
	Permanent	Prefabricated	Temporary	Shed
Primary	91	100	38	29
Junior-high	12	0	0	0
High school	47	1	8	0
Total	150	101	46	29

Most of the schools, 14 out of 17, had no cafeteria; where such were available, they were unhygienic facilities or irregular peddlers' kiosks without health inspection. Furthermore, few schools had air conditioning anywhere -- classrooms, teachers' rooms, or principals' offices. Air conditioners are especially important in prefabricated buildings, which are hot in the summer and cold in the winter. Extreme temperatures inhibit both teaching and learning. The problem is especially grave in schools on the periphery, where most of the classrooms are prefabricated. The investment in air conditioners is not considered worthwhile in schools in temporary settlements, as the government intent is to encourage residents to relocate to the permanent settlements.

As for libraries, eleven principals stated that their schools had small libraries and six reported having no libraries at all. The principals of the library-equipped schools expressed great dissatisfaction with the size of their libraries. Only four schools had laboratories equipped to the principals' satisfaction. Other schools had underequipped laboratories and eight schools, all primary, had no laboratory at all. Only five schools had laboratory assistants and only three had agricultural equipment. The situation with respect to video systems was different: most of the principals (13) reported having such equipment, but most of the schools (14) had few cassettes (7) or none (7). About half (8) the schools had computers with 10-12 work-stations.

None of the schools in the sample had a gymnasium, only three (two primary, one secondary) had standard athletic fields, and five primary schools had no athletic field whatsoever.

Only one principal reported that his school, a high school, had adequate physical-education equipment. Four principals, all of primary schools, reported having no physical-education equipment.

Number of Men and Women Teachers

The survey shows that male teachers outnumbered women teachers in the primary schools by 194 to 104. Women teachers were more prevalent in primary schools (35 percent) than in post-primary schools (20 percent). Most women who teach in Negev Bedouin schools come from northern Israel, and their turnover is high (Abu-Saad, 1994).

The higher rate of women teachers in primary schools may be associated with two factors: the women teachers have less training than the men, and the education system is more flexible with respect to uncertified or inappropriately trained women teachers at the primary level. This attitude is based on the assumption that teaching requires more professional skill at the junior-high and high-school levels than at the primary level.

The numerical gap between men and women teachers reflects the representation of women in the entire Bedouin education system, for the dropout rate of girls between grades 1 and 12 is a very high 85 percent, exceeding the dropout rate of boys, itself high at 71 percent (Abu-Saad, 1995).

Traditionally, daughters are of great economic value in Bedouin society (ibid.), as manifested in their direct contribution to the household and, particularly, animal husbandry. Therefore, despite the changes sweeping the Bedouin economy, many families do not encourage their daughters to stay in school. There is also an unexpressed apprehension about the enhanced social status that women may obtain if they acquire an education, for this is thought to threaten the patriarchal structure of Bedouin society. Another factor that helps explain the underrepresentation of Bedouin women on the teaching staff is the early age of marriage and the traditional prohibition of work outside the household by married women. Furthermore, large families of poor socioeconomic status tend to prefer the education of boys to that of girls. Finally, some parents dread the "pernicious" influence of Israeli society on their daughters.

The low proportion of women teachers creates a double problem for girls in school: they find themselves in a school environment composed largely of men, while their social norms enjoin them from developing close relationships with male teachers, thus restricting their scholastic opportunities and, evidently, encouraging them to drop out. Thus girls are prevented from identifying with possible role models in the education system and portrays the school as a masculine institution in which women have no place as students, let alone as teachers or principals. Another problem is logistical: The distance from the girls' homes to the teachers' colleges and universities deters many parents from allowing their daughters to advance to higher studies.

Table 5: Ratio of Boys and Girls in Negev Bedouin Schools

Year	Boys (N)	Girls (N)	Total (N)	Ratio of Girls to Boys	Proportion of Girls in Total Enrollment
1983	7,338	3,866	11,204	53%	35%
1993	13,096	10,553	23,649	81%	45%

Source: Ministry of Education, Southern District, 1993

Although the proportion of girls in Negev Bedouin enrollment has been rising steadily in the past decade, from 1:2 in 1982/83 to 4:5 in 1992/93, roughly one-fifth of Bedouin girls still do not attend school.

Enrollment

The principals were asked to report the number of boys and girls enrolled in each class. Their replies show that as the grade level rises after first grade, the level of enrollment decreases. For example, one of the primary schools had 43 children in kindergarten, 75 in first grade, and only 23 in eighth grade. If we assume that the age groups are roughly equal in size, these figures point to a dropout rate in excess of 50 percent. Another primary school, located in a permanent settlement, had 144 children in kindergarten, 189 in first grade, and 103 in sixth grade -- a dropout rate exceeding 40 percent.

All but two of the schools in our sample exhibited a large difference between boys' and girls' enrollment.

Table 6: Boys' and Girls' Enrollment in the Schools Sampled

School	Boys	Girls
1	225	208
2	282	265
3	222	187
4	429	338
5	500	535
6	465	429
7	246	196
8	572	347
9	658	484
10	363	212
11	476	475
12	516	433
13	315	234
14	303	239
15	228	187

The increase in enrollment between kindergarten and first grade illustrates the problematic status of kindergarten in the eyes of Bedouin parents. The findings in our survey reflect the trend throughout the Negev Bedouin education system, in which, according to Ministry of Education data, 2,201 children were enrolled in kindergarten as against 2,988 in first grade.

This can be explained in several ways. One possibility is that most Bedouin mothers do not work and therefore prefer to keep their children under their supervision instead of sending them to kindergarten. Another is that parents do not enroll their children in kindergarten out of ignorance of the importance of early-childhood education.

Children in Need of Special Attention

When asked how many schoolchildren need special attention, the principals did not reply on the basis of documented and systematic information; instead, some came up with a number and wrote

it down, asking the researcher, "Do you think this number is reasonable?" Others gave answers such as "I don't know," "All of them," "Quite a few," "Most of the pupils need special attention," and "Three hundred pupils need special attention." This response mode reveals an unprofessional and unsystematic approach to work with children with learning problems and shows a basic lack of understanding in matters of special education. Under such circumstances, the Bedouin schools cannot attain one of their goals: identifying and treating specific problems such as mental retardation, learning disabilities, and reading disabilities among the pupils. The principals' answers also give evidence of their low expectations of the pupils -- a state of mind that does not enhance the youngsters' prospects of scholastic success.

All the principals who filled out the questionnaire answered the question on pupils in need of scholastic reinforcement. Approximately half of them (eight) reported that their schools had programs designed to help such pupils. However, all of the principals, without exception, reported having received no guidance in work with learning-disabled students.

To complete the picture, most of the teachers -- roughly 80 percent -- stated that they had been given no guidance in dealing with low-achieving pupils. Most of those who reported having received such guidance cited the principal as its source.

Table 7: Number of Pupils in Need of Special Attention and Methods of Treatment*

How many pupils need special attention?	Is a remedial program being used?	How many pupils need special education?	Do you receive guidance in treating learning-disabled children?
40% of enrollment	No	Not yet diagnosed	No
100	Yes	50	No
300	No (no room)	30%, "They all need special education"	No
60	Yes, remedial tracking	"Some, I cannot decide how many"	
50	No	5	No
100	No	1	No
"Most of the school " needs special attention	No	No, "There has been no diagnosis, but most need it"	No
100	No	None	No
100	Perah ("Big Brother") program	50	No
70	Yes, reinforcement classes	14	No
100	Yes (without elaborating)	None	No
100	Yes, enrichment program on Fridays	100	No
Quite a few	Yes, two groups of 21 pupils	Some	No
50	No	Some	No
All of them, 575 pupils	Yes, Friday enrichment in English and mathematics	None	No
Don't know	Yes, help with matriculation in English and mathematics	I don't know	No
300	No	200, but there is no treatment for them, despite the fact that I requested it	No

* Each line represents the replies of one principal.

Screening and Tracking

The junior and high school principals were asked whether the students in their schools are screened before admission. The principal of one junior-high replied that his school accepts all applicants. The other junior-high principal stated that he screens applicants on the basis of their grades at primary school and then gives them an entrance examination. All four high-school principals stated that they screen applicants on the basis of tests that they administer. One high-school principal added that in the future he would have to admit all applicants because the Ministry of Education had established a new policy to this effect.

The principals were asked whether their schools employ in tracking. One high-school principal disregarded the question. The other three high-school principals and the two junior-high principals answered in the affirmative. When asked to elaborate, one junior-high principal stated that each grade has one "good class" and another explained that his school uses tracking in mathematics, English, Arabic, and Hebrew. The high-school principals stated that they had tracking in the same four subjects. One principal stated that his school had tracking in art and geography as well. Thus the Bedouin principals, like their Jewish counterparts, seem to regard screening and tracking as necessities that help improve the school's scholastic level.

Auxiliary Services

The findings show that most Bedouin schools in the south are short on auxiliary services. Only five schools are visited by psychologists, only two by social workers, and only four have school guidance counselors. The shortage of professional service providers is an impediment to the work of the principal, who is not always aware of the students' scholastic and adjustment problems. Consequently, students who have difficulties do not get the professional help that might help them progress in their studies.

No school in the sample is regularly visited by a nurse or doctor. Only four schools are visited by truant officers, notwithstanding the high dropout rate. Most of the principals reported having coordinators on the class and subject levels and for social activities.

Table 8: Auxiliary Services

Auxiliary service	Primary schools		Junior high		High schools	
	Available	Unavailable	Available	Unavailable	Available	Unavailable
Nurse	0	11	0	2	0	4
Psychologist	4	7	1	1	0	4
Social worker	2	9	0	2	0	4
Guidance counselor	0	11	2	0	2	2
Doctor	0	11	0	2	0	4
Truant officer	1	10	2	0	1	3
Subject coordinators	7	4	2	0	3	1
Social coordinators	8	3	2	0	4	0
Class coordinators	8	3	2	0	4	0

Additional Findings

The research questionnaire given to the high-school principals included an appendix with open-ended questions, in which the principals were asked to compare their schools with others in Israel, to cite their schools' major needs, to list three accomplishments of their own, and to describe their plans to improve the school.

One of the most striking points in the replies was the principals' omission of the Ministry of Education as the party responsible for the harsh conditions in the Negev Bedouin schools. Instead, the pupils and the parents are blamed.

Another pattern in the replies had to do with the way principals in the Bedouin education system are appointed. One of the most serious allegations expressed by principals -- and teachers -- is that the considerations in such appointments are political and tribal, not professional. The researchers heard such remarks face-to-face but did not find them in the written replies. This may explain why the principals refrained from criticizing the Ministry of Education. Practically speaking, the principal of a Bedouin school *is* a representative of the Ministry, and it is therefore no surprise that he would refrain from criticizing the system.

The principals were asked: "How do you rate your school in comparison with other Arab schools?" Their replies seem to overlook the reality of their schools' achievements: "I don't think my school is any different from any school in the Arab sector"; "My school performs acceptably -

- it is still developing"; "We are trying to be among the best"; "I rate my school as middle or higher relative to other schools."

When asked, "How would you rate your school against other schools in Israel?" the principals gave the following replies:

- * "It's in the middle of the field in the Southern District; there are problems that need attention."
- * "Were it not for objective difficulties such as type of population, this school could be one of the best in the country."
- * "Considering the social conditions, the background, and the socioeconomic situation, I rate my school as middle-ranking compared with the countrywide situation."

These answers show that, in the principals' estimation, the problems are traceable to parents and pupils or intractable "objective" difficulties. The principals rank their schools in the middle of the scale or higher and believe that Bedouin schools perform well in comparison with Arab schools in Israel. The contrast between the students' achievements and the principals' assessments may be attributable to the principals' view of the school as a physical and custodial agency rather than an educational setting meant to ensure its students' advancement, and to their low expectations (reinforced by the parents) of their students.

When asked to list their schools' three most important needs, the principals mentioned many of the shortcomings that came to light in the survey: programs for learning-disabled and special-education students, teachers with specializations, professional guidance and supervision, computers, suitable and adequate buildings, and more classrooms. The replies of one of the principals focused on the students and their parents. He noted the lack of parental cooperation and described the problems as "admission of weak students" and "the difficulty of expelling problematic students."

When asked about the improvements they intended to make, the principals mentioned hiring professionally-trained personnel, including experienced and talented teachers, psychologists, and guidance counselors; introducing technological education; moving into appropriate school buildings; improving the level of achievements; introducing entrance exams; expelling problematic students, and enhancing cooperation with parents.

When asked to list "three important successful accomplishments," the principals provided replies that fell into several categories:

- * Enhancement of achievements: "improving the achievements of most students," "excellence on a level our school has not known before";
- * Improvement of staff: "[hiring] of qualified staff," "hiring of a woman teacher for the girls for the first time in the school's history";
- * Obtaining extra hours and equipment: "laboratories and equipment"; "one of the best chemistry and biology labs in the school system"; "special-assistance hours for students preparing for matriculation in mathematics and English";
- * Parental involvement: "Involvement of parents in school life"; "[formation of] a parents' committee for the first time in the history of our school."

One senses a measure of hyperbole ("in the history of our school") if not inaccuracy in some of these responses, because the achievements reported by the principals are inconsistent with the shortcomings reported by the teachers and the principals themselves. The survey elicited great dissatisfaction with the current situation and illuminated many problems, such as high dropout rates, low matriculation rates, lack of professional guidance and services, shortages of classrooms and scholastic aids, and absence of parental cooperation. The principals' replies evidently reflect more precisely their wish to provide a positive portrayal than the real situation. This disparity between wishful thinking and reality underscores more strongly than anything else the confusion and impotence of the Bedouin schools and those who head them.

THE TEACHERS

Four hundred thirteen teachers participated in the survey: 217 in primary schools, 56 in junior highs, 49 at the Amal technological high school in Tel Sheva, and 90 in academic high schools. One teacher did not specify his affiliation. Roughly 90 percent of the teachers (375) work in permanent settlements; the other 37 work in primary schools in temporary settlements. Two of the ten schools in the temporary settlements, all of them primary, were included in the sample. In the statistical analysis, the teachers' replies were distributed by type of school (primary, junior-high, Amal, and academic high school) and by type of settlement (permanent and temporary).

Teachers' Residence

Examination of the permanent residence of teachers in Negev Bedouin schools shows that 56 percent live in the Negev and 44 percent in northern or central Israel. Local teachers are more highly represented in primary schools (69 percent) than in academic high schools (40 percent), the Amal school in Tel Sheva (50 percent), and junior-high schools (36 percent).

Table 9: Teachers' Residence, by Type of School

Residence	Primary		Junior high		Amal		Academic high	
	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N
Northern or central Israel	28.1%	61	61.8%	34	49%	24	58.4%	52
Negev	69.1%	150	36.4%	20	49%	24	39.3%	35
Elsewhere	2.8%	6	1.8%	1	2%	1	2.2%	2
Total	100%	217	100%	55	100%	49	100%	89

The fact that more than 40 percent of teachers in the Negev Bedouin education system are not local residents is indicative of a set of diverse problems, including high turnover of much of the teaching staff, non-identification with the students and the Bedouin community, and condescension. It is true that the proportion of outside teachers has decreased over the past few decades (Ben-David 1994), but they are still highly represented on the faculty.

An overwhelming majority of teachers, 95.4 percent, profess the Muslim faith, as do the students. Seven teachers (1.7 percent) identify themselves as Christian, eight (2 percent) as Jewish, and four (1 percent) as "other." The proportion of Muslims is higher at the primary and junior-high levels (99 and 100 percent, respectively) than at Amal (85.7 percent) and the academic high schools (88.8 percent).

Teachers' Qualifications

Generally speaking, the proportion of teachers with certificates or academic degrees in the Bedouin schools is similar to or slightly higher than the share of such teachers in the Arab education system. However, the proportion of uncertified teachers -- those with the lowest level of training -- is higher among the Bedouin than in the Arab system.

The Bedouin primary schools in our sample have a higher proportion of academically trained teachers than primary schools in the Arab system (18 percent as against 15 percent, respectively) and a lower share than that in the Jewish education system (24 percent). At the post-primary level, the proportion of academically-trained teachers is higher in the Bedouin system (61 percent) than in the Arab system (56 percent) and approximates the level in the Jewish system (63 percent) (figures for the 1992/93 school year; see Sprinzak et al., 1995).

Table 10: Teachers' Qualifications

Type of Qualification	Primary		Junior high		Amal		Academic high	
	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N
Uncertified	16.6%	34	3.7%	2	6.4%	3	3.4%	3
Certified but not graduate of general or teachers' college	3.9%	8	1.9%	1	4.3%	2	--	--
Certified and graduate of general or teachers' college	18.0%	37	9.3%	5	17.0%	8	8.0%	7
Senior teacher	52.4%	108	31.5%	17	29.8%	14	9.2%	8
University graduate (B.A.)	4.9%	10	38.9%	21	21.3%	10	39.1%	34
B.A. and teaching certificate	3.9%	8	9.3%	5	10.6%	5	31.0%	27
Master's degree			3.7%	2	6.4%	3	8.0%	7
Other	0.5%	1	1.9%	1	4.3%	2	1.1%	1
Total	100%	206	100%	54	100%	47	100%	87

The proportion of uncertified teachers in the post-primary schools in our sample is 4 percent, higher than the incidence in post-primary Jewish schools (2 percent) but lower than the figure in the Arab system (6 percent) (ibid., 1995). The uncertified teachers included 10 who lacked a matriculation certificate but taught in the primary schools, and one such teacher at Amal.

The proportion of teachers holding the rank of "senior teacher" in Bedouin primary schools is identical to the figure throughout the Arab system, 52 percent, and slightly lower than that in the Jewish system (55 percent). The proportion of senior teachers in post-primary schools, 20 percent, resembles the rate in the Jewish system (19 percent) and falls short of that in the Arab system (26 percent) (ibid.).

By cross-tabulating the training of teachers and their place of permanent residence -- Negev or elsewhere -- we find a 10 percent share of uncertified teachers in both groups. However, a higher proportion of local teachers -- 42.9 percent as against 27.8 percent of outside teachers -- have the rank of "senior-teacher" (bestowed by a Ministry of Education supervisor). A higher proportion of outside teachers have bachelor's degrees or degrees plus teaching certificates, but a higher proportion of local teachers have master's degrees -- 5.4 percent as against 2.8 percent of the outside teachers. This evidently reflects the paucity of local employment opportunities available to university-trained Negev Bedouin.

Table 11: Teachers' Qualifications by Permanent Residence

Type of qualification	Local teachers		Outside teachers	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Uncertified	24	10.7%	17	10.1%
Certified, not graduate of general or teachers' college	7	3.1%	4	2.8%
Certified graduate of general or teachers' college	39	17.4%	18	11.2%
Senior teacher	96	42.9%	48	48.7%
Bachelor's degree	31	13.8%	42	24.2%
Bachelor's degree plus teaching certificate	13	5.8%	29	18.0%
Master's degree	12	5.4%	5	2.8%
Other	2	0.9%	4	2.2%
Total	224	100%	178	100%

Teachers who reported having been certified on the job were asked who had certified them. Of the 251 teachers who answered this question, 82 (32.7 percent) cited the general supervisor and 52 (20.7 percent) the general supervisor together with the subject supervisor; 68 teachers (27.1 percent) reported not having any teaching certification.

Teachers certified on the job were asked when they were certified -- on the supervisor's first or second visit or after at least three visits. About 50 percent of the teachers reported having been certified after the first or second visit. In this respect, no difference was found between teachers in schools in permanent as against temporary settlements.

When we examined the type of teaching certification by type of locality -- temporary or permanent -- we found major differences, most in favor of permanent settlements. The proportion of uncertified teachers is more than twice as high in temporary settlements: 22 percent as against 9 percent. The proportion of general or teachers-college graduates is higher in temporary settlements than in permanent settlements -- 27 percent as against 13 percent -- and that of teachers with academic degrees is much lower -- 2.7 percent as against 37 percent. The fact that all schools in temporary settlements are primary explains some but not all of the variance.

Table 12: Teachers' Qualifications by Type of Locality

Type of qualifications	Permanent settlements		Temporary settlements	
	Percentage	N	Percentage	N
Uncertified	9.5%	34	21.6%	8
Certified, not graduate of general or teachers' college	2.8%	10	2.7%	1
Certified, graduate of general or teachers' college	13.2%	47	27.0%	10
Senior teacher	36.4%	130	45.9%	17
Bachelor's degree	20.7%	74	2.7%	1
Bachelor's degree plus teaching certificate	12.6%	45	--	--
Master's degree	3.4%	12	--	--
Other	1.4%	5	--	--
Total	100%	357	100%	37

Our examination of teachers' areas of specialization showed, as expected, that the proportion of general teachers is higher in primary schools than in post-primary schools; the

proportion of subject-specific teachers is higher in post-primary schools and highest in academic high schools. Only five special-education teachers were found -- 2.4 percent of teachers in primary schools and 1.2 percent of all teachers in the sample. In comparison, 3.4 percent of teachers in the Jewish system (1992/93 school year) engage in special education (Sprinzak et al., 1995).

Table 13: Teachers' Specialization

Specialization	Primary		Junior high		Amal		Academic high	
	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N
General teachers	41.5%	88	9.1%	5	10.2%	5	2.2%	2
Subject-specific teachers	39.2%	83	76.4%	42	83.7%	41	94.4%	84
Special-education teachers	2.4%	5	--	--	--	--	--	--
Early-childhood teachers	9.9%	21	--	--	--	--	--	--
No specialization	3.8%	8	7.3%	4	2.0%	1	1.1%	1
Other	3.3%	7	7.3%	4	4.1%	2	2.2%	2
Total	100%	212	100%	55	100%	49	100%	89

Teachers' specializations vary by types of locality. None of the special-education teachers is posted to a temporary settlement, and 11 percent of teachers in such settlements have no specialized qualification, as against 3 percent in the permanent settlements.

Most teachers in post-primary schools teach the subject in which they specialize. However, a sizable minority do not -- slightly more than one-fourth of teachers at the junior-high level, 15 percent of teachers at Amal, and 3 percent of teachers in the academic high schools.

Table 14: Teachers' Duties, by Specialization

Type of teaching	Primary		Junior high		Amal		Academic high	
	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N
All or many hours teaching subject of specialization	53.3%	112	73.3%	41	85.1%	40	96.7%	86
Few hours of specialization or teaches any subject	46.7%	98	26.8%	15	14.9%	7	3.4%	3
Total	100%	210	100%	56	100%	47	100%	89

Guidance and Supervision

One of the goals of the study was to assess the level of supervision and professional guidance in Negev Bedouin schools. We found that approximately one-half of teachers do not benefit from professional supervision in their subjects and that 56 percent do not have a subject advisor. The proportion of teachers who reported not having a subject supervisor or advisor is higher in the temporary localities than in the permanent settlements.

Table 15: Lack of Professional Guidance and Supervision, by Type of Locality

	Permanent settlement		Temporary settlement	
	Percentage	N	Percentage	N
No subject supervisor	46.2%	165	55.6%	20
No subject advisor	55.6%	193	63.6%	21

The teachers were also asked about the frequency of visits to their classes by supervisors and advisors. The proportion of teachers who reported no visits was 25 percent with respect to general supervisors, 55 percent with respect to subject supervisors, and 63 percent with respect to subject advisors.

Table 16: Frequency of Visits by General Supervisor, Subject Supervisor, and Subject Advisor

Frequency	Once per month		Once every few months		Once per year		No visits	
	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N
General supervisor	13.2%	51	38.8%	150	23.3%	90	24.8%	96
Subject supervisor	4.3%	16	21.7%	81	18.7%	70	55.3%	207
Subject	9.4%	34	16.9%	61	10.8%	39	62.9%	227

No significant difference was found in the frequency of supervisors' and advisors' visits to schools in permanent as opposed to temporary settlements.

School-Teacher Relations

One purpose of the study was to examine several issues connected with working procedures in schools: frequency of faculty meetings, major topics in teachers' talks with principals or supervisors, frequency of principals' visits to classes, and subjects of discussion at faculty meetings. A majority of teachers, 62 percent, reported that faculty meetings took place once a month or less. More than one-third of the teachers stated that their schools held meetings only once every few months. Nine teachers, 2.2 percent, reported that their schools held no faculty meetings at all.

Table 17: Frequency of Faculty Meetings

	Percentage	N
Once per week	2.9%	12
Once every few weeks	21.6%	88
Once per month	37.3%	152
Once every few months	35.9%	146
No meetings	2.2%	9
Total	100%	407

When the teachers were asked about the major topic discussed at faculty meetings, the most common answer was "behavioral and other problems of students." Two other topics that preoccupied teachers at the meetings, as reported by the teachers, were "procedures and organizational matters" and "curricula and how to implement them."

Curricula and Teaching

The survey included several questions about curricula, such as: "Do you follow a defined Ministry of Education curriculum in the subject that you teach?" "To the best of your knowledge, is the curriculum that you use the latest one?" and "How well suited is the existing curriculum to the students' culture?"

More than half of the teachers reported having a defined curriculum from the Ministry of Education in the subjects that they teach. The proportion of such teachers was much higher at the academic high schools than at the primary level -- 70.8 percent as against 45.3 percent, respectively. The percent of teachers who stated that they do not follow any Education Ministry curriculum and who reported not knowing of curricula in their subjects is higher in the primary schools than at the post-primary levels.

Table 18: Use of Curricula

	Primary		Junior high		Amal		Academic high	
	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N
I follow a defined curriculum for some of the material taught	28.0%	60	34.5%	19	34.0%	15	16.9%	15
I follow a defined curriculum for all the material taught	45.3%	97	49.1%	27	59.6%	28	70.8%	63
I follow no Ministry of Education curriculum	13.1%	28	5.5%	3	6.4%	3	4.5%	4
I am unaware of curricula in my subject	13.6%	29	1.5%	6	--	--	7.9%	7
Total	100%	214	100%	55	100%	46	100%	89

Differences were found between permanent and temporary settlements in this respect: 55.4 percent of teachers who work in permanent settlements stated that they had curricula for all subjects taught, as against 29.7 percent of teachers in temporary settlements. The reason for the difference may be the fact that all schools in temporary settlements are primary schools. Furthermore, only 18 percent of teachers in permanent settlements, compared with 40 percent of teachers in temporary settlements, reported that they either do not use or do not know of Education Ministry curricula.

When asked about the innovativeness of the curricula, slightly more than half of the teachers, 56.8 percent, described the curriculum they used as the newest in the field. Here, too, a variance was found between types of settlements: 58.5 percent of teachers in permanent

settlements described themselves as using the most recent curricula, as against only 39.4 percent of those in temporary settlements.

A defined curriculum is a teaching aid and a yardstick to use in measuring class progress. Furthermore, teachers, especially when inexperienced, sometimes require guidance in implementing the curriculum. When asked whether they had been given such guidance, approximately half of the teachers, 53.8 percent, replied in the negative. No variance was found in the teachers' replies according to type of settlement.

Table 19: Guidance in Implementing Curricula

Replies to survey question: Did you receive guidance in using the curriculum?

	Percentage	N
Yes, by an Education Ministry advisor	11.2%	44
Yes, through an in-service activity	16.2%	64
Yes, by other agent	18.8%	24
No guidance received	53.8%	212
Total	100.0%	344

In the absence of individual or in-service guidance, teachers may avail themselves of an instruction manual pertaining to the curriculum. However, more than half the teachers reported not possessing such a manual, and 10 percent reported having such a manual but not making use of it. Teachers in permanent settlements are better equipped than those in temporary settlements: about 54 percent of the former and 62 percent of the latter attested to having no instruction manual.

The teachers were also asked about their satisfaction with the curricula that they were using. One-third described the curriculum as adequate and consistent with needs, 45 percent as good but suitable for only some of the needs, and 18 percent as unsuitable for the students. The proportion of teachers who expressed strong satisfaction with the curriculum was lower in our survey than the 50 percent reported by Al-Haj (Al-Haj, 1995).

Table 20: Rating the Curricula

	Primary		Junior high		Amal		Academic high	
	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N
Good and appropriate for needs	35.1%	73	27.8%	15	31.9%	15	31.8%	28
Good, but meets only some of needs	43.3%	90	50.0%	27	55.3%	26	39.8%	35
Unsuitable	18.8%	39	18.5%	10	4.3%	2	23.9%	21
Other	2.9%	6	3.7%	2	8.5%	4	4.5%	4
Total	100%	208	100%	54	100%	47	100%	88

Because the Bedouin in Israel are a minority within a minority, and because their children's cultural background is unlike that of Israeli Jews or of Arabs living in the northern and central parts of the country, the survey included a question on the suitability of the curriculum to the students' culture. Twenty-six percent of teachers described the curriculum as suited to the students' culture, 54 percent as suitable in part, and 18 percent as unsuitable. The highest degree of unsuitability was reported by the best educated teachers, those in the academic high schools. This finding may reflect an observation by Mar'i: The higher the level of learning, the higher the Arab students' level of alienation (Mar'i, 1978).

Table 21 "How Suitable is the Curriculum to the Students' Culture?"

Suitability	Primary		Junior high		Amal		Academic high	
	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N
Curriculum is suitable	29.4%	58	21.8%	12	29.5%	13	16.7%	14
Only part is suitable	50.3%	99	61.8%	34	50.0%	22	60.7%	51
Curriculum is unsuitable	17.8%	35	16.4%	9	15.8%	7	19.0%	16
Other	2.5%	5	--	--	4.5%	2	3.6%	3
Total	100%	197	100%	55	100%	44	100%	84

A higher proportion of teachers in temporary settlements than in permanent settlements -- 25 percent as against 17 percent -- described the curriculum as unsuited to the students' culture.

Sometimes a curriculum poorly suited to the students' culture may be adjusted. When asked about the flexibility of the curriculum, 43 percent of teachers defined the curricula they were using as flexible, 45 percent as flexible in part, and 12 percent as utterly inflexible.

The divergent views on the flexibility of the curriculum pertain to different curricula in different subjects. They may also attest to different degrees of talent of the teachers themselves.

School-Community Relations

The teachers' questionnaire included items on the quality of school-community relations, as manifested in the extent of parent involvement and the substance of the teacher-parent relationship.

When asked whether parents were actively involved in school life, the majority of teachers answered by stating that the school has a parents' committee. Here, a difference between primary and post-primary schools surfaced: 70.6 percent of teachers in primary schools reported the existence of a parents' committee as against 38.5 percent of teachers in academic high schools. Only two teachers, both in junior high, reported that each class has a parents' committee. No significant differences were found between schools in permanent and temporary settlements on this issue.

Table 22: Parents' Committees

	Primary		Junior high		Amal		Academic high	
	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N
Committee exists in school	70.6%	149	48.2%	27	58.3%	28	38.5%	33
Committee exists for each class	--	--	3.6%	2	--	--	--	--

The proportion of teachers who did not report the existence of a school-level parents' committee -- 60 percent in high schools and 30 percent in primary schools -- and the negligible mention of such committees at the level of each class -- two teachers -- attest to a low level of parent involvement in school affairs.

The teachers' reports on weak parent involvement, however, do not tally with their firm conviction (90 percent of teachers) that the principals encourage dialogue with parents. The

incongruity is evidently rooted in the teachers' fear of making remarks that may sound critical of the principal, a pattern noted by Al-Haj (Al-Haj, 1995).

When asked about the nature of their relations with parents, a majority of teachers mentioned the annual parents' assembly or informal talks with parents. Fewer than half of the teachers reported having held personal talks with parents in order to discuss their children's problems. Thirty percent of the teachers stated explicitly that they had no contact whatsoever with their pupils' parents. This included twenty-five percent of primary-school teachers and 40 percent of academic high-school teachers.

Table 23: Type of Contact with Parents*

	Primary		Junior high		Amal		Academic high	
	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N
General assembly	9.4%	20	10.7%	6	--	--	10.1%	9
Informal talks	25.4%	54	35.7%	20	22.9%	11	24.7%	22
Personal talks								
about children's problems	46.9%	100	32.1%	18	47.9%	23	38.2%	34
No contact whatsoever	24.9%	53	32.1%	18	33.3%	16	39.3%	35

* Some teachers checked off more than one reply.

Teacher-parent relations are more tenuous in temporary settlements than in permanent settlements: 44 percent of teachers in permanent settlements reported having held personal talks with parents about children's problems, as against 30 percent in the temporary settlements. A slightly higher percentage of teachers in temporary settlements, 30 percent as against 36 percent in permanent settlements, reported having had no contact whatsoever with pupils' parents. One presumes that these teachers are not local residents.

The weakness of liaison between school and community is manifested in scanty parent involvement in school life and in a low level of communication between teachers and parents. In such circumstances, what do teachers think about the parents? Our assumption was that since they are more highly educated than most of the parents and, in many cases, not local residents, the teachers would not regard the parents as suitable partners in the children's education. Following this assumption, we asked the teachers whether they believed the parents of the children in their classes needed guidance to be better parents.

Table 24: Teachers' Views on Parents' Need of Guidance

	Primary		Junior high		Amal		Academic high	
	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N
All the parents need guidance	27.8%	58	27.3%	15	31.1%	14	34.5%	30
Most parents need guidance	30.1%	63	45.5%	25	42.2%	19	43.7%	38
Some parents need guidance	34.9%	73	12.7%	7	26.7%	12	20.7%	18
The parents do not need guidance	7.2%	15	14.5%	8	--	--	1.1%	1
Total	100%	209	100%	55	100%	45	100%	87

In contrast to their reluctance to respond in ways that might be construed as criticism of the principal, the teachers did not hesitate to select answers that could be interpreted as criticism of the pupils' parents. A majority, 66 percent, stated that all or at least most parents needed guidance to help them function as parents. This is especially interesting when we recall that nearly 40 percent of teachers in the sample attested to having had no personal contact with parents and 30 percent denied having interacted with parents in any manner whatsoever.

Teachers in primary schools seem to hold parents in higher esteem than do teachers at the post-primary levels. The latter are both better-educated and more likely to have come from outside the community. A majority of teachers in both kinds of settlements, permanent and temporary, stated that all or most of the parents need guidance.

DISCUSSION

Physical Conditions

The survey shows that the physical conditions in Negev Bedouin schools are not up to Israeli standards. This is true not only for schools in "temporary" localities but also for those in permanent settlements. Predictably, however, the conditions are worse in temporary localities than in permanent ones; schools in temporary localities do not even have electricity and running water.

About one-fourth of the classrooms in the schools surveyed are situated in prefabricated buildings or sheds. None of the Bedouin schools has air conditioning or heating, although the Negev climate is famous for extremes in temperature.

The problem of the school buildings shows how much distance must still be traversed until the advantages of the Government's policy of concentrating the Negev Bedouin in permanent settlements come to fruition. The construction of appropriate school buildings, as well as health-service facilities, should be the first and perhaps the major step towards keeping the promise to provide Bedouin who move to permanent settlements with the full range of state services that, officials claim, are hard to deliver to a nomadic population group.

However, even if appropriate school premises are built in the permanent settlements, the Ministry of Education is still duty-bound to provide such buildings in the temporary settlements as well, so that their residents, too, may benefit from education services of appropriate quality.

In Israel, it is the local government's task to provide buildings for schools. Because of the residents' low socioeconomic level, however, the Bedouin local governments generally lack the resources to do this, and the temporary localities have no such governments at all. Thus, it is the duty of the Ministry of Education to honor Israel's promise to eliminate educational disparities by allocating larger sums to improve the physical conditions of the Negev Bedouin schools.

Teachers' Level of Training

The survey found significant differences between permanent and temporary settlements in the quality of teaching staff: the proportion of uncertified teachers is 22 percent in temporary settlements and 9 percent in permanent settlements. The proportion of teachers with academic degrees is 2.7 percent in temporary settlements, compared to 37 percent in permanent settlements, where not all variance can be attributed to type of school. Half of the teachers surveyed received certification from their supervisors, usually after one or two visits to their classes, rather than from an institution of higher learning.

Teachers' Familiarity with Curricula

Teachers in permanent settlements are more familiar than teachers in temporary settlements with the Ministry of Education curricula. The latter reported making less use of innovative curricula and instruction manuals and were more likely to regard the curricula as poorly suited to the students' culture.

Scholastic Achievements

The achievements of Negev Bedouin pupils, as reported by the principals, are extremely poor. Their success rate on matriculation exams has risen in the past few years, but this evidently reflects the exclusion of weak students from the exams.

Furthermore, the principals reported a decrease in the level of matriculation (expressed in study units) earned by high-school graduates. Most of those who passed the tests in the basic subjects -- Hebrew, English, and mathematics -- obtained a certificate at no more than three study units. Such a certificate is not recognized by the higher-education system, the portal through which youngsters advance to the social mainstream.

The decrease in the number of students taking the exams is evidently connected with the principals' wish to maximize the rate of success, a parameter perceived in recent times as a major indicator of quality in high schools. This also seems to explain why high-school principals wish to administer screening exams for applicants and to introduce tracking even in subjects such as

arts and geography. The principals seem to regard screening and tracking as ways to improve their schools' public image; thus, they evidently forgo in advance the very possibility of leading the entire student population to a higher level of scholastic achievement.

Kindergarten and School Attendance Rates

More than one-fourth of five-year-old Negev Bedouin do not attend kindergarten. This makes the Bedouin a standout group in Israeli society, for kindergarten attendance among other population groups is nearly universal.

The poor attendance rate in Bedouin kindergartens is usually attributed to two main factors: most Bedouin mothers do not work outside the household and prefer to keep their children under their care, and many Bedouin parents are unaware of the importance of formal education in early childhood.

However, another explanation deserves mention: the Education Ministry's efforts to concentrate all Bedouin schools in the permanent settlements, as part of the general government policy of relocating all Bedouin in a small number of such localities.

Kindergartens in the Arab sector in general, and of the Bedouin in particular, are situated in primary-school buildings, evidently in order to save money. Consequently, localities that have no primary school also have no kindergarten. This depresses kindergarten enrollment among residents of temporary settlements because the parents find it difficult to transport their children to a kindergarten far from home. Importantly, the policy of not building kindergartens in temporary settlements correlates with the Education Ministry's laxity in applying the Compulsory Education Law of 1949. Needless to say, children who do not attend kindergarten are deprived of an opportunity to acquire basic skills that will help them adjust to life in Israeli society -- an opportunity to which every child in Israel is entitled under the Compulsory Education Law.

Gender Differences in Attendance Rates, Dropout Rates, and Teaching Staff

Several gender differences were found in the Negev Bedouin education system:

- a. Boys outnumber girls.
- b. Dropout rates are high among both sexes but especially high among girls.
- c. Male teachers outnumber female teachers by almost two to one. In the post-primary schools in our survey, only 20 percent of the teachers were women. None of the women teaching at the high-school level was a Bedouin.

Treatment of Weak Pupils

The survey found the Negev Bedouin schools unprepared to cope with learning-disabled pupils. This finding is especially grave when one considers that, according to the principals, many of the students fit this definition.

The principals reported that they receive no assistance whatsoever in their efforts to cope with difficult pupils. Only five of 413 teachers in the survey are trained in special education, and none of them is employed in a temporary settlement.

The schools' inability to cope with the problems of difficult pupils is manifested primarily in the principals' unprofessional attitude toward the problem. The survey found that the principals do not keep systematic records on such students; when asked about this by the researchers, they provided vague and undocumented approximations.

The School and the Community

Many teachers in Negev Bedouin schools come from outside the area, usually from Arab communities in central or northern Israel. Most of these "outside teachers" are better educated and professionally qualified than the local teachers. However, their limited and circumscribed contact with local residents and their lack of familiarity with the Bedouin way of life cause several problems. One of the most common is a condescending attitude toward local parents; another is a low level of expectations of local students. Thirty percent of teachers who took part

in the survey stated that they have no contact whatsoever with their pupils' parents, and over half reported not holding personal talks with parents about their children's difficulties.

Teachers in primary schools hold the local parents in slightly higher esteem, perhaps because a higher proportion of teachers at this level are Bedouin.

Notwithstanding the lack of relations between teachers and parents -- or perhaps for this very reason -- more than one-third of teachers believe that parents are in need of assistance to make them better parents.

Team Spirit and Teachers' Involvement in School Management

The teachers' replies elicit the picture of a teaching staff that has no role to play in running the school. The teachers in our survey usually refrained from criticizing their principals and reported that all issues of importance were duly discussed in faculty meetings. However, they also reported that the principals do not call regular, periodic meetings: Half of the teachers reported staff meetings at frequencies of once every few months and nine teachers stated that their schools held no faculty meetings at all.

Who Is at Fault?

As the survey findings show, school principals in Negev Bedouin communities have to cope with exceedingly grave problems. Nevertheless, they prefer to absolve the education system of responsibility for these problems, instead blaming the students and the parents.

It may be that the principals, as holders of official government positions, regard themselves -- at least vis-a-vis the researchers -- as representatives of the education system. Perhaps, too, the principals consider themselves, vis-a-vis students and parents, as identified with the authorities no less than with the community. Whatever the case may be, it is clear that the principals are driven by conflicting identities.

Part of the reason for this phenomenon may originate in a problem mentioned by some of the respondents: the way principals in the Bedouin education system are appointed to their positions. Some teachers alleged that teachers and principals are appointed not only on the basis

of professional criteria but also, if not mainly, on the basis of political and tribal considerations. Under such circumstances, a principal may be guided by considerations of "You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours," instead of the best interests of the school and its educational mission.

In school-community affairs, too, the fact that the principals regard themselves as representatives of the system vis-a-vis the community presumably affects relations. The high-school principals describe parents' non-involvement as a central problem, but their assertions in this context may be nothing but lip service. Furthermore, the principals' intentions may be different from those mentioned in the pedagogical literature, i.e., they seek parental input not in determining the school's educational goals but in restraining problematic students. The customary paradigm in Jewish Israeli schools is a parents' committee for each class plus a school-level committee. In our survey, only two of 17 principals reported the existence of class-level parents' committees, and most reported a very low level of parent involvement in all areas of school activity. Were the principal to regard himself as a representative of the community, he would probably attempt to liaise with parents and encourage them to become active.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Resources should be invested in improving the scholastic achievements of Bedouin youth so that a higher proportion of them may advance to higher studies.
2. A "think tank" of teachers, principals, and other educators should be created in order to devise ways to raise the share of matriculates among Bedouin high-school students.
3. Bedouin high-school graduates should be given incentives to enroll in collegiate and university teacher-training programs.
4. Bedouin with teaching certificates should be offered incentives to work as teachers in Negev schools.
5. Teachers employed by Bedouin schools in the Negev should be given instruction in the use of the diverse curricula and teaching aids issued by the Ministry of Education and others.
6. Principals should be instructed to promote the continuing education of teaching staff by sponsoring in-service training.
7. Culturally-appropriate curricula should be developed in order to eliminate the current alienation between the school environment and the community.
8. Kindergartens should be established in all Negev Bedouin localities, including those defined as temporary.
9. The programs that train Bedouin kindergarten teachers today should be expanded and made more flexible.
10. More positions should be created for truant officers in Bedouin localities.
11. Bedouin teachers should be trained in special education and other specialized subjects.
12. Involvement of Bedouin parents in schools should be encouraged, either by instructing principals and teaching staff in ways to achieve such involvement or by holding workshops for parents on parent-involvement themes.
13. The appointment procedures in the Negev Bedouin education system should be revised in order to terminate the unacceptable practice of using such appointments as a means of social control over the Bedouin.
14. Educators concerned with the Bedouin education system need to be guided by a worldview that regards the school as a means of integrating the Bedouin into the mainstream of Israeli society.

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