

Development prospects in Albuqai'a Plain A study in the applied geomorphology

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Abstract

The study aims at showing the things related to the actual possibilities of Albuqa'a Plain which are represented by the following:

1. Showing the role of the gemorphologic and hydrologic features of Albuqa'a Plain in deterring the best use of each of its parts.
2. Studying the natural potentials of Albuqa'a Plain according to the factors of soil, weather and surface and underground water.
3. Identifying the best use and chosing crops that suit the natural conditions to the plain which inhances the agricultural and biological diversity, that would cover the people's needs from one side, reduces unemployment and raises the economic level of the people on the side.

Albuqai'a area is considered an important, strategic, border area in the West Bank. That is because of its wide area and average slope as well as its geographical location as compared to the neighbouring areas. In the past, this area suffered of lack of comprehensive planning and preparing projects in specific areas there. It is one of the Palestinian areas which face challenges and obstacles as a result of the Israeli occupation procedures like land confiscation and taking over the natural and water resources, limiting the building and housing process, in addition to the geopolitical characteristics related to the administrative divisions of the study area since the largest portion of Albuqai'a Area is considered a C area under the Israeli administrative rule.

This study has focused on the natural factors which is represented by the geological structure, geomorphologic and climatic situation and the human factors represented by the Israeli occupation and its various procedures. The study searched in the influence of these factors on the development process represented by population growth, urban development and agricultural investment. The study also aimed at identifying the social, economic

characteristics of the farmer. In addition, the study followed the stages of the population growth, the urban development and the agricultural expansion in Albuqai'a area.

The study area is considered a strategic area in the West Bank in general and Tubas governorate in particular. The study revealed the success of the agricultural projects in the study area on the economic front. The study followed the historical style in studying the population, urban growth and the agricultural expansion in Albuqai'a area. It followed the descriptive style to clarify the human and natural factors which affect development in Albuqai'a area. The researcher has resorted to field visits to the area and carried out interviews with the officials in charge of that area in the governmental institutions as well as interviews with the farmers and investors in the plain. The study was based on aerial photos and maps to identify the study area and decide the use of land there. These aerial photos were also used to determine the administrative divisions of the area. The program of Geographical Information System has been utilized in the analysis processes.

The study has come up with the result that the Israeli occupation and the spread of settlements and military camps and their arbitrary measures against the inhabitants have the highest effect in the agricultural expansion and the prevention of using the land perfectly in Albuqai'a area. They also have effect on the human existence in the area which was witnessed from the interviews with the inhabitants, especially in Khirbit Alras Alahmar who suffer from the ongoing vandalism of their homes and farms by the Israeli occupation forces. The other neighbouring population centers in C areas also suffer as they are prohibited from issuing building licenses.

The study has come up with the following conclusions:

1. The natural factors with the climate as the most important of all play a big role in the agricultural system.
2. The study area suffers of two dangerous problems which are the lack of water and the Israeli occupation and its procedures.
3. The negative effect of the settlements and military camps on the agricultural system through controlling the water and the land.
4. There is a tendency towards the organized use of the agricultural land in Albuqai'a area rather than the random use as the agricultural guiding and the use of modern and sustainable technology is there.

The study culminated in the following recommendations through which the agricultural sector in Albuqai'a area can be developed sustainably:

1. Solving the problem of marketing the intensive agricultural production expected in Albuqai'a plain through opening new markets.
2. The necessity of providing the water which is needed for the ambitious agricultural plans in the plain.
3. Focusing on the products which are suitable for the natural conditions of Albuqai'a plain.
4. The necessity of reclamation of the unused land which will increase the agricultural area which will lead to sustainable agricultural development.
5. Organizing awareness programs for the people in Albuqai'a area about the importance of planning in the success of the big agricultural projects which will have huge economic benefits contributing in the sustainable development of the plain.
6. The importance of creating an association for the farmers of Albuqai'a plain.

The importance of directing the governmental agricultural development plants towards developing agriculture in Albuqai'a plain