



BEHBAHAN II. POPULATION, 1956-2011

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ii. Population, 1956-2011

This article deals with the following population characteristics of Behbahan city: population growth from 1956 to 2011, age structure, average household size, literacy rate, and economic activity status for 2006 and/or 2011 (different dates for the above categories are determined by the availability of census data).

Population growth. Behbahan has experienced a moderate and at times low rate of population growth except during the Iran-Iraq War (see [IRAQ vii](#)), increasing from a population of 29,886 in 1956 to 107,412 in 2011. During the period 1956-76, the average annual growth rate was close to 2.5 percent, and the population reached 49,378 people. From 1976 to 1986, the population growth rate of the city reached a value of 4.77 percent per year, as the population leaped to 78,694 people. Since Behbahan was one of the safer cities in the country during the Iran-Iraq War, this increase may be attributed in part to war-related population movements. As the war came to an end (i.e., after the cease-fire of 1988), the population growth rate for Behbahan dropped sharply to 1.75 percent per year between 1986 and 1991 and to 0.55 percent per year between 1991 and 1996. The population of Behbahan grew to 85,846



in 1991 and 88,213 in 1996. Since then, the annual population growth rate for Behbahan has continued to decrease, falling to 1.38 percent in the years 1996-2006 and 1.20 percent in the years 2006-2011, as the population grew to 101,178 and 107,412 people (Table 1).

Age structure. The population of Behbahan can still be considered as young. In 2011 almost 73 percent of the population were in the activity ages of 15 to 64; another 21 percent were below 15 years of age, and only 6 percent were 65 and over. That is slightly older than the age structure of the urban areas as a whole. The age structure in 2006, though younger than that in 2011, also was slightly older than that of urban areas as a whole (Table 2).

Average household size. In 2006, the average household size in the city of Behbahan was 4.2 persons per household (*National Census, 2006, SCI, 2010, p. 88*), which was significantly higher than the average of 3.89 for urban areas as a whole (*SCI, 2009b, p. 50*). In 2011, the average size declined to 3.7 persons per household (*SCI, 2014*), not significantly higher than the average size of 3.48 for the urban areas as a whole (*SCI, 2014*).

Literacy rate. In 2006, almost 88.6 percent of the population of Behbahan six years of age and over were literate. The literacy ratio was significantly higher for males (91.8 percent) than for females (85.3 percent; *SCI, 2010, Table 4, p. 147*). Comparison to urban areas in general, either for both sexes (88.9 percent) or for each sex (92.2 percent for males and 85.6 percent for females; *SCI, 2009b, pp. 223, 225, 227*), suggests relatively the same literacy rates in Behbahan.

Economic activity status. In 2006, almost 86.48 percent of the population of Behbahan, or 87,496 people, were in the activity ages (i.e., 10 years of age and over), of whom 34.5 percent were economically active and 64.7 percent inactive, while the status of the rest (0.8 percent) was unknown. The activity ratio in Behbahan is clearly lower than the national average ratio for cities (38.8 percent, *SCI, 2009b, p. 35*). Employment and unemployment ratios in Behbahan are estimated at 88.7 percent and 11.3 percent of the active population (i.e. of 34.5 percent of the population; *SCI, 2010, p. 181*). These figures indicate that the ratio of employment in Behbahan is almost the same as the national average ratio for cities (with 88.2 percent employed and 11.8 percent unemployed; Table 3).

Population projection. Population projection for cities is not a systematic



process in Iran and usually depends upon development plans or the case studies needed in larger plans. The author of this article, in connection with a study to plan for the water distribution network for Khuzestan province, estimated the city's population would be approximately 112,000 people in 2021 (Nejatian, 2013).

Bibliography (for cited works not given in detail, see the *EIr Short Titles*):

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