



BIRJAND II. POPULATION, 1956-2011

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ii. Population, 1956-2011

This article deals with the following population characteristics of Birjand 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 categories are determined by the availability of census data).

Population growth. Birjand has experienced a very high but ever declining rate of population growth except during the Iran-Iraq War (see [IRAQ vii](#)), increasing approximately thirteenfold from a population of 13,934 in 1956 to 178,020 in 2011. During the period 1956-76, the average annual growth rate was 6.26 percent, and the population grew from 13,934 to 46,943 people. From 1976 to 1986, the population growth rate of Birjand reached the value of 5.71 percent per year as the population leaped to 81,798 people. As the war came to an end (i.e., after the cease-fire of 1988) the population growth rate for Birjand dropped to 4.34 percent per year between 1986 and 1991 and to 4.75 percent per year between 1991 and 1996. The population of Birjand reached 101,177 in 1991 and 127,608 in 1996. Since then, the annual population growth rate for Birjand has continued to decrease, falling to 2.67 percent between 1996 and 2006 and to 1.39 percent between 2006 and 2011, as the population grew from



127,608 in 1996 to 166,138 in 2006 and to 178,020 in 2011 (Table 1).

Age structure. The population of Birjand can still be considered as young. In 2011 almost 70.2 percent of the population was in the activity ages of 15 to 64; another 25.4 percent were below 15 years of age, and only 3.9 percent were 65 and over. This age structure is significantly younger than that of all urban areas as a whole. The age structure in 2006 was even younger than that in 2011 and that of urban areas as a whole in the same year (Table 2).

Average household size. In 2006, the average household size in the city of Birjand was 4.0 persons per household (*National Census*, 2006, SCI, 2010, p. 88), which was slightly higher than the average of 3.89 for urban areas as a whole (SCI, 2009b, p. 50). In 2011 the average size declined to 4.3 persons per household (SCI, 2014), significantly higher than the average size of 3.48 for the urban areas as a whole (SCI, 2014). *Literacy rate.* In 2006, almost 91.6 percent of the populations of Birjand six years of age and over were literate. The literacy ratio was significantly higher for males (94.3 percent) than for females (88.8 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 male and 85.6 percent for female; SCI, 2009b, pp. 223, 225, 227), clearly suggests a higher literacy rate in Birjand.

Economic activity status. In 2006, almost 86.8 percent of the population of Birjand, or 137,945 people, were in the activity ages (i.e., 10 years of age and over), of whom 39.7 percent were economically active and 59.3 percent inactive, while the status of the rest (1.0 percent) was unknown (SCI, 2010, p. 181). The activity ratio in Birjand is higher than the national average ratio for cities (38.8 percent, SCI, 2009b, p. 35). Employment and unemployment ratio of the active population in Birjand is estimated at 84.6 percent and 15.4 percent (i.e., of 39.7 percent of the population 10 years of age and over). These figures indicate the ratio of employment in Birjand is lower than that in urban areas in the country as a whole (Table 3).

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