

Analysis situation of Activity Status in Urban and Rural Area Population of Iran

Mortaza tavakoli

PhD, Faculty Member; Department of Geography, University of Zabol, zabol, Iran
tavakoli@uoz.ac.ir or tavakoly52@gmail.com

Abstract: The study has looked into the population of Iran aged 10 and above by activity status and sex including the urban and the rural areas. An analysis of the country's population and activity status could explain the economic and social situations of the state and its people. The increasing unemployment and reduction of goods and productive services may cause some detrimental effects in the society and country's economy. Through the study's assessment on the country's population and activity status, the collaboration of the government and its various sectors can set forth to strengthen human development by investing in human resources and employment. A significant increase in the population rate of male and female students in the rural areas and with the decrease in the rate of homemakers for both sexes is a good sign. This implies that these individuals have seen the potentials of education in empowering them to develop their skills and abilities and obtain necessary knowledge of making a living and becoming a productive individual. Population growth forms formidable barriers to a country's progress and development and this phenomenon is usually attributed to socio-cultural, religious and environmental factors but with a better understanding of its occurrence will help regulate and control its growth.

[Tavakoli mortaza. Analysis situation of Activity Status in Urban and Rural Area Population of Iran. Journal of American Science 2011;7(5):152-157]. (ISSN: 1545-1003). <http://www.americanscience.org>.

Keywords: activity status; rural and urban area, Iran

1. Introduction

Iran's population both in the urban and rural areas continues to increase over the next decades from its first national census in 1956. (Mohseni 1977) The number of employed and unemployed persons has also markedly increased from 1956 to 2006. With the rate of growth in population, it also follows that the rate of unemployment is rising fast and poses a problem to the country. In 1967, in acknowledgement to family planning as a form of human rights and foreseeing its benefits on the socio-economic situation of families, the government of Iran launched the active family planning program, which lowered fertility rates. However, after the Islamic revolution in 1979, the family planning program was eradicated and then restored in the 1990s due to population growth, which led to the country's economic crisis. (United Nations 2001)

The rise in Iran's population explains the increasing social and financial discontent of unemployment in the country since they comprise a major part of the national population. Their number is gradually increasing and due to economic crisis whose detrimental effects can hit most those already suffering financially. Rapid population growth as seen by economists hinders a country's effort to meet the needs of its people. Its resources are utilized to provide for the requirements of its growing population and sectors of the country instead of venturing on more investments that are productive. In this case, the government fails to produce more job

opportunities compared to the increase of work force (Popenoe 1969).

The objective of this paper is to assess the overall population rate and rate of economically and non-economically active population in the country including the urban and rural areas of Iran by sex. Specifically, it aims to find out the rate of employed and unemployed population by sex in rural and urban areas and if the trend has, either decreased or increased in a span of 50 years from 1956 to 2006.

The Associated Press (2010) has stated that in 2005, the new government promoted population growth ensuring incentives and support to families who advocated the program. But the source from which this financing will be obtained is still unsure. Advocacy to population growth can be attributed to the people's socio-cultural values and beliefs where the family is considered the center of life among the people. But with the gradual education of women and men on family planning and with the increase of health centers in Iran, it has helped in lowering the rapid population growth that has deterred economic growth in Iran over the past years. The paper will definitely be significant to government sectors of Iran. A systematic identification of the various issues, concerns, problems and, impediments to economic development would guide the proper government sectors how to extend the most appropriate and effective assistance to Iran's population control and

opening wider opportunities for employment and better incomes for the people (Copus2006).

In addition, Iran's present rapid growth of population can be attributed to certain factors such as more birth than death rates and immigration and emigration rates. Although on a national level, migration from one region to another does not change the number of population in a country, there could be adverse effects, which can be felt in urban areas where population influx is constantly on the rise thus regions tend to develop at different rates depending on the productive activity of different human endeavors. These urban areas become appealing to many who seek employment, business ventures and those educationally oriented thus, increasing the population in these areas (Hoodfar1994). Eventually these areas become more congested causing problems in housing situations, inefficiency of government services and rise in unemployment rate. A country suffering from heavy population increase becomes a ground for social and economic problems (Coleman 1980). The economy of Iran depends much on its oil industry, but on the other hand, it also has many natural resources such as agricultural lands and minerals waiting to be explored and developed for economic possibilities with the efforts of the people and the government. This paper illustrates how population growth leads to a country's numerous problems and one of these is the rise of unemployment rate in both urban and rural areas. Unemployment is a waste in the country's human resource. If these resources are fully recognized and utilized, the economy of the nation will be better.

2. Material and Methods

The study is descriptive in nature. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were employed in the data acquisition and analysis. The study uses the data obtained from the Ministry of Interior, Statistical Centre of Iran on the country's total population, employed and unemployed persons in both urban and rural areas. The data focused only on a 50-year period from 1956 to 2006. The population obtained does not come successively but that there is a gap of 10 years from one year to the next. It was analyzed to identify Iran's population at a specific year including the number of employed and unemployed persons in urban and rural areas. This information falls under the economically active population. The unemployed as part of the data pertains to those who are looking for work.

Other data pertained to the not economically active population in both the urban and rural areas of the country include the student population, homemakers, income recipients and others. The

income recipients are persons who are receiving pension and retirement benefits.

For the purpose of quantitative analysis, the number of male and female population as well as the number of employed and unemployed population was converted into percentages. The unemployed population is specifically those who are seeking work. These percentages were then compared to identify the category and community area that would need more attention and improvements.

3. Results

Table 1 illustrates Iran's total country population and the population of the country distributed according to community type – urban and rural areas from one decade to the next beginning from 1956 to 2006. It is evident that there is a sharp increase in the total population of the country. The number of males comprises 50 to 52 per cent of the population while the number of females comprises 48 to 49 per cent of the total population which indicates that majority of Iran's population consists of males.

From 1956, Iran's total population has increased to more than 46 million in 2006. The rise in population for both male and female occurred most in the urban areas as seen in Table 1. The year 2006 has brought about the highest increase in the male population in the urban area hitting 69 per cent while the female population was at 79 per cent. It is also observed that from 1956, the total population in the urban areas was just 32 per cent and has gradually increased to 69 per cent in 2006. This is also true for both male and female population rate, which slowly rose in the decades that came after.

On the other hand, the male population in the rural areas had its highest rate of 66 per cent in 1956 but the population slowly dropped to 30 per cent in 2006. The female population has also decreased from 67 per cent in 1956 to 30 percent in 2006.

In general, as illustrated in Table 1, the total country population and the population rate in the urban areas have increased throughout the decades from the first national census in 1956 until 2006. On the contrary, the population in rural areas has decreased from 1956 to 2006 and so do both its male and female population. In 2006, almost 70 per cent of the people live in the urban areas while 30 per cent reside in the countryside.

Looking at Table 2a, there is an increase number of the total country's employed and unemployed population from 1956 to 2006. The urban areas of the country also show an increase and between 1976 and 1986 there is 7.4 per cent of increase in the employed population. Initially in 1956 from an unemployment percentage of 54, the number

decreased to 21 in 1966 and continued to maintain a low unemployment rate in 1976 with 22 per cent. Then unemployment in the urban areas rapidly grew in a span of 10 years from 1976 to 1986 with 36 per cent in difference.

As illustrated in Table 2a, between 1956 and 2006 the total number of employed persons dropped from 69 per cent to 31 percent that is About half of the initial percentage in 1956. Unemployment in the rural areas started at 45 per cent in 1956 and rapidly rose to 78 per cent by 1966. From 1976 to 2006, unemployment continued to decrease reaching 36 per cent. While there is an apparent increase of employed and unemployed persons in the urban areas, the rural areas of the country illustrates otherwise. The percent of employed male population in the urban areas was doubled in 2006 from a initial mark of 30 per cent in 1956. Yet throughout the years between 1966 and 1976, there is a sudden 10 per cent rise in employment for the male population in the urban areas. In the countryside, male employment has decreased to 31.5% in 2006, which is almost half of the employed 69 per cent of males in 1956. Meanwhile in 1956 with 53 per cent of unemployed male in the city there was a rapid decrease of 30 percent, which obtained 22 per cent of unemployed males in 1966.

Table 1: Total Country Population and Population Distribution in Urban and Rural Areas by Sex, 1956 – 2006

	Total (thousand)	Employed (thousand)	Unemployed (thousand)
Total Country	6067	5908	159
1. 1956	7842	7118	726
2. 1966	9796	8799	997
3. 1976	12820	11002	1819
4. 1986	14737	13097	1640
5. 1991	16027	14572	1456
6. 1996	23469	20476	2992
7. 2006			
Community Type	Total (per cent)	Employed (per cent)	Unemployed (per cent)
Urban Areas			
1. 1956	31	30	51
2. 1966	35	36	21
3. 1976	44	46	22
4. 1986	54	54	58
5. 1991	57	58	53
6. 1996	60	60	58
7. 2006	67	68	62
Rural Areas			
1. 1956	68	69	45
2. 1966	64	63	78
3. 1976	55	53	77
4. 1986	44	45	40
5. 1991	41	41	45
6. 1996	39	39	40
7. 2006	31	31	36

Table 2a: Total Country Employed and Unemployed Population including Urban and Rural Areas 1956 – 2006

	Total Population (thousand)	Male (thousand)	Female (thousand)
Total Country			
1. 1956	12784	6542	6242
2. 1966	17000	8794	8206
3. 1976	23002	11796	11206
4. 1986	32874	16841	16033
5. 1991	38655	19997	18658
6. 1996	45401	23022	22379
7. 2006	59523	30244	29278
Community Type	Total Population (per cent)	Male (per cent)	Female (per cent)
Urban Areas			
1. 1956	32	33	32
2. 1966	39	40	39
3. 1976	49	51	48
4. 1986	55	55	55
5. 1991	58	58	58
6. 1996	62	63	62
7. 2006	69	69	79
Rural Areas			
1. 1956	67	66	67
2. 1966	60	59	60
3. 1976	50	49	51
4. 1986	43	43	44
5. 1991	41	41	41
6. 1996	36	36	37
7. 2006	30	30	30

Table 2b: Total Country Employed and Unemployed Population including Urban and Rural Areas by Sex 1956 – 2006

	Male Employed (per cent)	Male Unemployed (per cent)	Female Employed (per cent)	Female Unemploy ed (per cent)
Urban Areas				
1956	30	53	32	50
1966	37	22	32	13
1976	48	25	38	12
1986	54	57	53	64
1991	57	54	61	52
1996	60	60	56	52
2006	68	61	70	66
Rural Areas				
1956	69	45	67	50
1966	62	76	67	86
1976	51	74	62	87
1986	45	42	45	34
1991	41	44	38	47
1996	38	39	43	47
2006	31	38	29	33

In addition, 10 years thereafter there was just little increase to 25 per cent in 1976. But between 1976 and 1986, a marked increase of unemployment occurred arriving at 57 per cent and continued to rise to 61 per cent by 2006.

The rural areas started out with 45 per cent of unemployed males in 1956, which rose to 76 per cent in 1966. Male unemployment slowly dropped

by 2 per cent in 1976 at 74 per cent. Then in 1986, unemployment was brought down to 42 per cent reaching 38 per cent in 2006. Based on Table 2b, the rate of male unemployment in the urban and rural areas of Iran has presented some irregularities in the increase and decrease of unemployment between 1956 and 1986.

Female employment in the city has also shown a steady increase beginning 1956 to 2006. But as observed from the table, there was a decrease of employment among women from 61 per cent to 56 per cent in 1996 and rose again to 70 per cent by 2006. On the other hand, female employment in the rural areas declined from 67 per cent in 1956 to 29 per cent in 2006. An irregularity was also observed from 1991 to 2006 where female employment rose to 43 per cent in 1996 from 38 per cent of employed women in 1991. This was brought down again to 29 per cent in 2006.

Table 2b also illustrates an irregularity of women unemployment for those who live in the city and the countryside. Apparently, there was instability of female unemployment from 1956 to 2006. With unemployment at 50 per cent in the urban areas, this has declined to a low 13 per cent in 1966 then arriving at 12 per cent in 1976. But by 1986, the rate of unemployment dramatically changed and rose to 64 per cent. Though this has decreased to 52 per cent in 1991 and remained steady at 52 per cent until 1996, once again, this has increased by 14 per cent in 2006 becoming 66 per cent.

In the rural areas, the highest female unemployment rate occurred between 1956 with 50 per cent of unemployment to 1976 with 87 per cent increase.

However, between 1976 and 1986, the number of unemployed women declined to 34 per cent. There was a steady increase from 1986 to 1996 then dropped to 33 per cent in 2006.

Table 3a shows the total country population as well as the total percentage rate of not economically active persons in the urban and rural areas. This consists of the student population, home makers, income recipients and others. A large number of the country's population comprise of students whose population rate from 1956 to 2006 remained high from 62 per cent to 75 per cent. Home makers in Iran apparently show gradual increase from 31 per cent in 1956 reaching 67 per cent in 2006. The population rate of income recipients also increased over the past 50 years marking its highest rate in 1991 with 81 per cent which declined to 67 per cent in 1996 but managed to increase to 75 per cent in 2006. For others who are not economically active, the population rate also rose to three times more of its

initial population rate of 21 per cent in 1956 to 63 per cent in 2006.

Table 3a: Not Economically Active Population in Total including Urban and Rural Areas 1956 – 2006

Total County	Total (thousand d)	Student (thousand d)	Home Maker (thousand d)	Income Recipient (thousand d)	Other (thousand d)
1956					
1966	6717	685	4964	-	1068
1976	9158	1941	6017	-	1200
1986	13206	4443	7707	667	390
1991	19864	6531	11170	563	1601
1996	23482	9490	12095	454	1443
2006	28822	12633	13193	1298	1698
	35538	13117	16057	2974	3389
Urban Areas	Total (per cent)	Student (per cent)	Home Maker (per cent)	Income Recipient (per cent)	Other (per cent)
1956					
1966	34	75	31	-	21
1976	43	70	36	-	35
1986	53	69	45	54	49
1991	56	63	53	71	39
1996	58	62	56	81	45
2006	64	69	60	67	52
	69	73	67	75	63
Rural					
1956	65	24	68	-	79
1966	56	29	63	-	64
1976	46	30	54	45	51
1986	43	36	45	28	59
1991	41	37	43	18	54
1996	35	30	39	32	46
2006	30	26	32	24	36

The rural areas manifest some irregularities in the increase and decline in the population rate of students, income recipients and others who are not economically active. But the population rate of home makers in the rural areas has decreased from 68 per cent in 1956 to 32 per cent in 2006.

Looking at Table 3b, the number of students for the male and female population in the urban areas has shown a decrease from 1956 to 1991. The number of female students in the city was at the highest with 90 per cent while the number of male students was at 70 per cent. From 1956, it has continued to decline until 1991. It began to rise once more from 1996 to 2006. In the rural areas, the percent rate of students grew from 29 per cent to 68 per cent among males and 9 per cent to 33 per cent in 1991 among females. Sadly then this number has decreased between 1991 and 2006.

Male homemakers living in the urban and the rural areas were not stated in the census from 1956 to 1976. However, it is clearly seen that the male homemakers in the city have increased from 1986 to 2006 by 9 per cent. This is also true for female homemakers, which continued to grow in number reaching 67 per cent in 2006 from a low percent rate of 31 in 1956. If there is an increase of

male and female homemakers in the city, the countryside shows a decrease in their number. Male homemakers have decreased by 10 per cent in 2006 while female homemakers have also declined by 36 per cent.

Table 3b: Not Economically Active Population in Total including Urban and Rural Areas by Sex 1956 – 2006

	Total (per cent)	Student (per cent)	Home Maker (per cent)	Income Recipient (per cent)	Other (per cent)
Urban Areas					
MALE					
1. 1956	44	70	-	-	21
2. 1966	54	63	-	-	38
3. 1976	63	64	-	60	53
4. 1986	58	59	54	76	44
5. 1991	59	59	58	85	51
6. 1996	66	67	60	73	58
7. 2006	72	71	63	79	66
FEMALE					
1. 1956	32	90	31	-	20
2. 1966	32	86	36	-	32
3. 1976	50	77	45	42	41
4. 1986	55	68	53	54	33
5. 1991	57	66	56	56	39
6. 1996	62	72	60	50	45
7. 2006	68	75	67	70	59
Rural Areas					
MALE					
1. 1956	55	29	-	-	78
2. 1966	45	37	-	-	61
3. 1976	37	35	-	39	46
4. 1986	41	40	45	22	54
5. 1991	39	68	40	13	48
6. 1996	32	48	40	26	41
7. 2006	27	39	35	21	33
FEMALE					
1. 1956	67	9	68	-	79
2. 1966	59	13	63	-	67
3. 1976	49	22	54	57	58
4. 1986	44	31	45	45	64
5. 1991	41	33	43	43	59
6. 1996	36	27	39	49	53
7. 2006	31	24	32	29	39

An unsteady growth and decline of population rate among income recipients from the city was experienced throughout the years between 1976 and 2006. Yet during the years 1956 to 1966, there were no census noted on this particular category. The highest noted number of income recipients in the city occurred in 2006 for both male and female recipients. It differs in the countryside where the highest number occurred in 1956 for both male and female income recipients and continued to go down until 2006.

For the others who are not economically active, the population rate started low in 1956 with 21 per cent for males and 20 per cent for females. This number increased at a high rate by 2006 with 66 per cent and 59 per cent respectively for males and females living in the city. However, the opposite is experienced in the rural areas. The population rate for income recipients for both males and females

decreased from 1956 to 2006. From 78 per cent for males and 79 for females, these numbers went down to 33 per cent and 39 per cent for males and females respectively.

In general, while there is an increase in population rate for homemakers, income recipients and others in the city, a decrease in the number of these indicators of not economically population is seen in the rural areas. The student population however shows unsteady rise and fall of number between 1956 and 2006.

4. Discussion

It is evident that the rate of male and female population in the city has risen from 1956 to 2006 and so with the rate of employed and unemployed persons. With the rise of population and employment and unemployment in the urban areas, there is a decrease of population and employed and unemployed persons found in the countryside. This is due to possible migration from the rural areas to the city over the past years from 1956 to 2006. Naturally, the city becomes the center for productive activities and with many different human endeavors in business and commerce, education opportunities, industrial, cultural and political activities. These opportunities found in the urban areas become attractive particularly to those who are inclined in the field of business and educationally oriented individuals from the other rural regions of the country. Consequently, this leads to an increase in population in the cities thus causing the rural or less developed areas to lessen their work force and deprive them of other more productive ventures. For developing countries, the continued growth in the cities is an observed trend. (Appadu 2005).

While population growth for male and females in the urban areas has increased, the rate of employed and unemployed males and females has also increased. This may be considered due to factors such as the increase in birth rates and positive migration. But if not properly checked and regulated, excessive population and unemployment growth may lead to other problems such as economic, social, educational, health problems and moral degeneration.

In the rural areas however, there is an apparent decrease in population growth as well as the rate of employed and unemployed persons both male and female alike. The decline in population may be attributed to migration to the cities and improvements in family planning programs that have been introduced in the country through government information and education programs. (Dickson 2009).

A significant increase in the population rate of male and female students in the rural areas and with the decrease in the rate of homemakers for

both sexes is a good sign. This implies that these individuals have seen the potentials of education in empowering them to develop their skills and abilities and obtain necessary knowledge of making a living and becoming a productive individual. Sadly, in the urban areas while the number of students has occasionally seen some fluctuations, the number of homemakers has gradually increased for both male and female (chihiro 2010). This may be explained by the rapid population growth in the cities resulting to a reduction in the demand for goods and services. Such decrease in production and increase in population also results to inefficient usage of human resources and lost output in the society. Repercussions may mean that due to the government's inability to generate employment for the increasing number of work force in the country, possibilities of exploitation of workers by local and foreign capitalists can happen through low wages, poor working conditions and absence of other economic benefits (osinubi 2003).

Population growth forms formidable barriers to a country's progress and development and this phenomenon is usually attributed to socio-cultural, religious and environmental factors but with a better understanding of its occurrence will help regulate and control its growth.

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3/5/2011