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# Fertility

## 1 Introduction:

Fertility is the ability to have babies or to reproduce. When fertility rates in a community increase, more babies are born. Fertility is the quality of a human's ability to produce offspring, which is dependent on age, health, and other socio-biological factors.

## 2 Definition of Fertility:

### 2.1 According to Lewis and Thompson,

“Fertility is generally used to indicate the actual reproductive performance of a woman or groups of women based on the number of birth she/they give/s.”

### 2.2 According to Barnard Benjamin,

“Fertility measures the rate of which a population adds to itself by births.”

## 3 Fecundity:

- **According to Thompson and Lewis.** “Fecundity is a biological potential and the physiological capacity to participate in reproduction. The absence of this potential is known as infecundity or sterility. It is the capacity to conceive or bear children.”

## 4 Factors Affecting Fertility:

### 4.1 Biological Factors:

#### 4.1.1 Age:

- Women’s fertility declines significantly after age 30, particularly after 35.
- Men also experience decreased fertility with age, though the decline is more gradual.

#### 4.1.2 Hormonal Levels:

- Estrogen and Progesterone: Crucial for ovulation and maintaining pregnancy.
- Testosterone: Important for sperm production in males.
- Thyroid Hormones: Affect overall metabolism and reproductive functions.

#### 4.1.3 Food Habit and Nutrition:

Processed food, diets high in added sugars, trans fat, food chemicals, malnutrition affect fertility.

#### 4.1.4 Genetics:

- Genetic abnormalities can lead to infertility, such as chromosomal disorders.
- Some hereditary conditions might lead to infertility or difficulties in conception.

#### 4.1.5 Diseases:

Chlamydia and Gonorrhea, Syphilis, HIV/AIDS can cause infertility by damaging reproductive organs.

#### 4.1.6 Body Weight:

Both underweight and overweight conditions can disrupt hormonal balance and ovulation, affecting fertility.

#### 4.1.7 Health Conditions:

Conditions like polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), endometriosis, and diabetics can reduce fertility.

#### 4.1.8 Lifestyle Factors:

- Smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, drug use, and poor diet can negatively impact fertility.
- Nowadays women tend to plan for babies at a relatively late age and face miscarriage. As a result, they have test tube baby or take help of surrogacy.
- Microplastics have been found in human testicles, with researchers saying the discovery might be linked to declining sperm counts in men, which is alarming.

### 4.2 Indirect Social Factors:

#### 4.2.1 Age at Marriage:

It appears that fertility goes down when marriage takes place at a late stage.

#### 4.2.2 Polygamy:

- In polygamous relationships, fertility per woman may be very less.
- But when a husband begins to maintain more than one wife, then their first wives get more opportunities of meeting the husband and thus produce more children.
- And who are married at late stage and due to old age of the husband the sexual meetings between the husband and the wife are very less.

#### 4.2.3 Separation and Divorce:

- Divorce or separation always does not mean low fertility.
- It is related to many factors e.g. how frequent is the separation, what is separation period etc.
- A study conducted in Jamaica in 1954, showed that those couples which have a tendency to always live closer to each other have more fertility as compared with the couples who got separated from each other.

#### 4.2.4 Widowhood:

Widowhood quite obviously influences fertility. But the effect of widowhood on fertility depends on how soon she decided to remarry and at what age she becomes widow.

#### 4.2.5 Post Partum Abstinence:

Fertility is also affected by restrictions imposed by society or otherwise on reunion or sexual exposure of husband and wife, after the birth of a child.

#### 4.2.6 Abstinence and Menstruation:

Almost all over the world it is accepted that husband and wife should remain separate from each other, during menstruation period of the wife. Since the period of menstruation is practically that of separation, therefore, fertility is affected.

#### 4.2.7 Celibacy:

Fertility is also affected and influenced by social and self-imposed controls about marriages.

#### 4.2.8 Frequency of Coitus:

The frequency of coitus is an influencing factor in fertility. If the frequency of coitus is high, so the fertility rate.