

**MODERN TRENDS IN FERTILITY AND THEIR
EFFECT ON WORK AND FAMILY**

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It is not automatic that every person not committed to celibacy will raise a family. And even if they do, it is not automatic that they will get any children.

There are three main observable trends in fertility among couples in the world today

- No children
- Reduction in family size
- Delayed fertility.

NO CHILDREN

This is an increasing trend among many people today. Many individuals have made a deliberate decision not to have any children. Factors leading to this decision could be:

- Difficult childhood, poor upbringing, abuse in the home, absent parent(s).
Some people have a traumatic childhood. This leads to a decision not to have children later on in life. These people need counseling to accept the past with its short comings, and to be equipped to handle family life in future.
- Poor formation, selfishness and self preservation.
Some people simply do not want the disruption that accompanies child bearing. Child bearing and family life requires a lot of sacrifice and patience, and thinking very little about oneself. Some people want to be comfortable and happy, no stress, and no disruption. They find it difficult to care for another person, let alone themselves. These people opt not to have children. Such individuals are not born like that; these are acquired habits that need to be nipped in the bud in childhood and early adulthood.
- Feelings of being inadequate parents.
Some people have no clue what it entails to bear and raise a child. They are in the dark about the logistics of running a home. They will never risk raising a family because they are too afraid of the unknown. Hands-on experience helps gain confidence in the practical aspects of raising children. This exposure should start when the children are young, and with more practice, they feel less vulnerable. Reading good books, and good parental example, are also very useful.
- Very busy work and social lifestyle.
Some people are so busy at work and after work to even consider raising a family. Even if some do get married, the marriage is stressed because of the high level of activity outside the home. Some social lifestyles are incompatible with fertility.
- Medical issues.
Some people have complex medical issues that affect fertility, or require a certain amount of heroism. Such people might not be comfortable raising a family. Some are not willing to go to the medical trouble required to be fertile.

These issues have a negative effect on the family. Many people chose to remain single, and bury themselves in work, sports, philanthropic activities etc. If they get married, they still bury themselves in work, and travel, and sports, and enjoy life. This is not an ideal family situation.

REDUCTION IN NUMBER OF CHILDREN

- This is another major trend. Viewed as socially correct. Emphasized by governments and media, who say it is an impediment to economic growth
- Many people feel more financially secure with smaller families. But you can work harder, put more men on the job, and diversify!!!
- Some cultures shun large families, especially the Asian community and some countries in the west.
- Children from large poor families may have been traumatized as they grew up. They may feel that the large family contributed in some way to their misery, and many resolve to have a small family as a result.
- The desire to sacrifice does not come easy with many people. They may feel like large families reduce available income, and might slow down their plans for financial advancement.
- This of course is not true. Governments need to plan better to make use of our most precious resource, labor.

DELAYED FERTILITY

- Couples are settling down later and getting children when they are older. This means that they get fewer children. Also, they are already deeply committed to work and other activities, and so they are not as flexible as younger parents. They are also more likely to run into health problems, as these increase with age.
- Children of older parents might have social adjustment issues with their peers.
- Fertility declines with age and so there might be problems there.
- Older parents have worked longer, and generally have a better economic status, which they might not want to sacrifice for large families.
- Their patience thresh holds are lower, and so is their tolerance.