**Factors influencing Birth Rates**

1. Education of females

Creates opportunities for a career and financial independence giving women more choices in their lives. The chance to work may reduce the number of years left to have children.

Increase awareness of the consequences of larger family sizes – women may decide to have fewer children as a result.

Empowers women – they have a greater say in how they live their lives. As a result they may decided to have fewer children.

1. Access to birth control methods

The availability of effective family planning methods (eg contraceptive pill or condoms) makes it possible for people to plan the number of children they have. Those with little or no access have less control and often have more children as a result.

1. Rising costs of living

In many countries the costs of housing and education have risen considerably. Parents wanting the best for their children may feel that they cannot afford to bring up more than one or two.

1. Increased wealth

As people become wealthier their aspirations and life-styles change. There are more opportunities for travel and leisure, potential parents may decide to delay starting a family, or else decide not to start one at all.

Increased wealth means that people can prepare for their own retirement. As a result they do not need lots of children to look after them when they are old, so there is less need for a large family.

Increase wealth means that children are no longer needed to work in order to help the family. In many poorer parts of the world birth rates remain high as children are viewed as economic assets (ie valuable). For example, they can contribute to family income by working (eg on farms).

Growing wealth may lead to a desire for more material possessions. People my choose these ahead of children.

1. Urbanisation

Urban life often means smaller, more costly housing and higher living costs. Also, there are many opportunities for people to do things. This may lead them to have fewer children.

1. Religion

Some religions encourage large family size or else prohibit birth-control methods. Changing attitudes of the people affected by religions may affect birth rates.

1. Changing status of women

In many countries the status of women has been increasing. Women are becoming more empowered and can assert themselves more, both within society and relationships. This can influence the number of children they have.

1. Economic development and competition

As economies develop competition for jobs becomes more intense. Parents may decide to focus all their resources on raising a single child rather than spreading them over several children as this will help give their child the best start once they leave home.

1. Falling Infant Mortality Rates (IMR)

As improvements in healthcare and diet reduce the number of children dying each year, so parents can be more confident that all their children will reach adulthood. This in turn may lead them to have fewer children.

1. Symbolism

In some societies, large family size is viewed as an ideal and men in particular may view having many children as a symbol of their virility. Birth rates are often higher in those societies.

1. Government policies

Many governments try to influence birth rates through a range of policies. Some try to reduce birth rates (eg China’s One Child Policy), whilst others seek to increase it (Singapore).

**Factors Influencing Death Rates**

1. Developments in medical science

Treatments and cures for many diseases have been discovered (especially infectious disease), eg Small Pox was eradicated in 1980. As a result, fewer people contract diseases or are killed by them.

Development of health care systems including clinics and hospitals with qualified medics helps treat illness early. This has had a huge impact on infant mortality rates which have fallen significantly in many places around the world.

1. Developments in food production and supply

Improved farming methods have increased yields and made supplies more reliable so famine is less common. Transport improvements mean that food can be better distributed. People in many places can now have a more varied (and healthy) diet.

1. Education

People are more aware of how to stay healthy in terms of exercise, diet and lifestyle choices (ie choosing not to smoke tobacco).

1. Water supply

More people have access to safe drinking water which reduces incidences of disease (eg cholera) and illness.

1. Sanitation

Developments in the treatment and disposal of human waste (sewage) eg via flushing toilets public sewers, and waste treatment works leads to fewer people falling sick.