

## AFTER-EFFECTS OF VASECTOMY

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THE after-effects of vasectomy<sup>1</sup> have been the subject of many speculations here and abroad. These speculations centre round such questions as : Is it possible to have normal sexual relations after it? Does vasectomy affect the sexual desire? Does it do any harm to the normal behaviour of a male as a male? Studies to answer such questions being few, we conducted an enquiry into the after-effects of vasectomy with the help of a team of doctors. These doctors<sup>2</sup> had performed about two thousand vasectomies during 1954 to 1961 in a rural area. The doctors did this surgical work on week-ends when they visited the rural area and performed the operation on those who volunteered for it.

A proper enquiry of the after-effects of vasectomy could consist of (i) psycho-analytical studies, (ii) studies regarding physical changes after the vasectomy, (iii) studies of the reactions of the people towards their own sterilization, and (iv) the way the society looked at those who got so sterilized.<sup>3</sup> Out of these the first two needed a careful examination of the sterilized men by the experts in the field before and after vasectomy. For instance, vasectomy could produce nervousness, irritability or physical and mental weakness. It could also produce changes in the size and shape of the sex-organs concerned. All such possible changes needed careful observation of the conditions before and after the operation.

As no observations had been made regarding these matters before vasectomy, such medical check-ups after the operation were of little help. Clinical methods thus being out of the question, the only method left to us was the questionnaire method for conducting studies regarding (iii) and (iv). An enquiry was conducted with the help of the above doctors with regard to (iii) above using a questionnaire devised for the purpose, during 1959-1961. In all, 1191 men were contacted. A circular was sent round the villages where the doctors had performed the vasectomies before. Men were asked to gather in

<sup>1</sup> Vasectomy is the sterilization of the male for limiting the size of family.

<sup>2</sup> For more details regarding the work of the doctors the reader is referred to an article by the author in *Artha Vijnana*, September 1960.

<sup>3</sup> As will be seen later the questionnaire method needed the support of clinical findings to some extent in order to examine the effect of vasectomy on individuals. But to study the reactions of the society towards the sterilized, the questionnaire method was enough.