

AN EXPERIMENT TO GAUGE THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF STERILIZATION IN A RURAL COMMUNITY IN INDIA

VICTOR BARNOUW

(Assisted by Blanche G. Watrous and Emanuel F. Hammer)

IN NOVEMBER OF 1963 the writer gave the Rorschach Test and a modified form of the House-Tree-Person drawing test to one hundred married men from three rural villages near Poona in the State of Maharashtra, India. Fifty of these men had been sterilized; 50 had not. This project attempted to determine whether the vasectomy operation has any harmful psychological effects.

Thousands of men have been vasectomized, or sterilized, in the State of Maharashtra in recent years. It is an essentially irreversible operation. The purpose, of course, is to reduce the birth rate. Similar programmes are under way in other parts of India in the effort to check population growth.

Officials of the Office of Family Planning and members of the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics in Poona have done some interviewing to find out what sort of reactions the men have afterwards towards this operation, and how it affects their sex life, etc. In general, they have found that there seem to be no harmful effects.¹ However, no "depth" techniques had been used to gauge whether or not there might be any harmful psychological consequences. That was the purpose of the project to be described below, which had the cooperation of the Office of Family Planning in Poona.²

¹ DANDEKAR, KUMUDINI, 'After-Effects of Vasectomy', *Artha Vijnana, Journal of the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Poona (India)*, Vol. 5, No. 3, September, 1963, pp. 212-224.

² The writer's presence in Poona was made possible by a Faculty Research Grant from the American Institute of Indian Studies, but his project there had no connection with the experiment here described. The writer would like to thank Dr. K. T. Chitre, Mr. R. N. Saxena, Mr. K. H. Tergaonkar, and Mr. D. R. Maheshkar for their assistance in this project. Thanks are also due to Mrs. Kumudini Dandekar and Mr. N. V. Sovani of the Gokhale Institute for their interest and help in connection with this project.