

DEMOGRAPHIC EFFECTIVENESS OF STERILIZATION PROGRAMME IN INDIA

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THE concept of family planning in the sense of deliberate attempt on the part of married couples to space the births of their children and to plan the size of their family in relation to their social, economic and health status, has only recently come to India. Wattal¹ and Karve² were the pioneers to visualize, in the beginning of the present century, the growing population problem of India and publicly advocated family limitation in spite of indifferent attitude of the people and the authorities. The need for family limitation was equally felt by our leaders and authorities, but still the first half of the present century was spent in dialogues over the method to be adopted for achieving the end.

After Independence, the Government of India recognised the urgency of controlling population growth through reduction in the birth rate. Beginning with the First Five Year Plan (1951-56), it made some provision for family planning. Mechanical and chemical contraceptives were adopted and a voluntary sterilization programme was introduced in 1956. Recently the Government of India has given high priority to the sterilization programme as a primary method reducing the present high birth rate.

Sterilization is a surgical operation, the effect of which is to prevent the possibility of conception without altering or affecting the spontaneity of conjugal relations. This method is harmless, irreversible* and very effective in averting the unwanted births. Because of its irreversibility one has to be careful in determining the time and situation for operation without any harm to family life.

In this paper, it is intended to consider the demographic effectiveness of the sterilization programme in India as judged by its impact

* Recanalization facilities with fair chances of success are available in the country to a sterilized couple, in the event of some mishap to their living children, provided they desire to have more children.