

## PROMOTION OF FAMILY PLANNING IN RURAL AREAS—A FIELD EXPERIMENT

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The urgent need of measures to control the growth of population in India through a reduction of the number of births is now generally recognized. Like many other state governments, the Government of Maharashtra is actively promoting a programme of family planning and limitation in the state. Among other measures, it had recently organized an intensive campaign to popularize vasectomy as an effective method of family limitation. The purpose of this paper is to assess the success of such an intensive campaign in this field.

Even before the government showed active interest, a number of medical-social workers were known to be active in this field. Their activities were naturally almost entirely private and voluntary. It is proposed to review in this paper the work of a particular group of voluntary workers in a district prior to the intensive campaign sponsored by the government and compare with it the results of the campaign, so that, in a sense, the net results of official effort in this field may be high-lighted. For the purpose of comparison, it is proposed to choose South Satara district and examine the results of the official campaign against the background of the work of a health association, called the Janata Sahakari Arogya Kendra, at Sangli, the headquarters of the district.

The association was founded in 1952 by a group of three private medical practitioners in the town of Sangli. The association ran a maternity home and a family planning clinic in Sangli. Ever since its foundation the association was actively promoting the knowledge and practice of family planning particularly in rural areas in the district. For this purpose the association sent round a circular letter in 1958 through the District Local Board to all the village panchayats in the district. It was a brief letter by which the doctors offered to go to any village to do vasectomy provided there were at least 10 persons wanting to get it done and that the villagers were prepared to meet the expenses to and from Sangli at eight annas a mile. It also mentioned salphingectomy and invited anyone interested, to the clinic in Sangli where operation could be done for a very small charge. Finally it mentioned foam tablets and other contraceptives to be given free of charge to anyone with monthly income less than Rs. 100, and at a small cost to others. Along with this circular letter a public statement signed by 18 public men in the district was also sent round, recommending family planning in general and the work of the association in