

5-1-1978

[Book Review of] *Population and Family Planning Information* by Maria Mascarenhas

John J. Brennan

Follow this and additional works at: <https://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq>



Part of the [Ethics and Political Philosophy Commons](#), and the [Medicine and Health Sciences Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Brennan, John J. (1978) "[Book Review of] *Population and Family Planning Information* by Maria Mascarenhas," *The Linacre Quarterly*. Vol. 45: No. 2, Article 20.

Available at: <https://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq/vol45/iss2/20>

pages of *Linacre Quarterly* by Father William Smith and Dr. Vitale Paganelli (Vol. 44, Nos. 1 and 2).

The persistence of geographical variation on the morality of direct sterilization has been a major source of scandal and has been divisive of and injurious to the witness of the Catholic health apostolate. Hospital administrators and staff members in following the *Ethical and Religious Directives* are offering a set of values to a society sorely in need of conscientious direction. Father Boyle has developed a set of ground rules for accepting the popular morality of a pluralistic society as an alternate set of guidelines for Catholic hospitals. Many short-term administrative problems could seemingly be solved by accepting this solution to "the sterilization controversy." There is serious question, however, as to whether the long-term survival of a Catholic medical presence would be similarly well-served.

— Eugene F. Diamond, M.D.

Loyola University Stritch School of Medicine

Population and Family Planning Information

Dr. Maria Mascarenhas

Family Welfare Centre, 21 Museum Rd., Bangalore, India.

This inexpensive booklet has been prepared by Dr. Mascarenhas, a fascinating woman, who has basically the same philosophy as Drs. John and Lyn Billings. Its cover shows a map with the overpopulated and underpopulated areas of India delineated.

It defines Family Planning as the exercise of the basic human right to decide on the spacing and number of children for the purpose of enriching the quality of life in the family. Its benefits are good health, economic stability, better education, increased family welfare, better marriage adjustment, well developed personalities, and cultural growth.

The booklet encourages late marriages, a long interval between births, breast feedings as long as possible, fewer children, better education and health care for existing children. The number one priority for population control is better education, especially for women. There is a clear link between educational status and family size. Only 9% of rural women are literate.

Advantages, disadvantages, and effectiveness are outlined for seven methods of Family Planning. These are permanent, behavioral, natural, chemical, mechanical, hormonal, and loops.

The disadvantages of contraceptive pills and coils are apparent and make them unattractive. Most space is devoted to the Natural Method. A typical chart is shown. The significance of dry days and mucus days is stressed. Peak day is the last day on which a woman observes any wetness or dampness and/or discharges stretchy mucus. Ovulation follows the peak within 24 hours.

"Natural Family Planning is defined as a dialogue leading to responsible parenthood. It is based on an educated awareness and acceptance of the cyclic phases of fertility," Dr. Mascarenhas says.

"I can teach a chimpanzee how to give an injection, but I need human beings to go to the villages and change the masses towards health."

— John J. Brennan, M.D.