

Mishra, S. (2017). *Remember me: You, me and dementia. India: Suprija Print Art, 253 pp. ISBN: 978-93-85221-05-7*

Reviewed by Anupama Datta¹

The book by Sailesh Mishra, founder of Silver Innings Group, India is a pioneering attempt by a social entrepreneur and a sensitive individual to shed light on a very important yet overlooked topic in India - dementia. The author has made an attempt to inform the common people about the disease, its stages, impact on the person with dementia and other medical facts, in good detail. However, the main focus is on care which, as of now, is more important than information on cure. Therefore, the book is presented as a sagacious mix of information, which is comprehensive enough to make this book into a manual; at the same time it is interspersed with first person accounts of caregivers and family members. It conveys very effectively the trials and tribulations of caregivers, both in institutional settings and in the family, besides capturing the experience of the persons suffering from the disease. There are a few poems in the book that are poignant especially 'Who Am I?' by Rama Rangaswamy. However, in the emotional narrative of the care givers we can see a common thread that relates to a very important policy question, that is quality care for persons with dementia. Almost all the persons suffering from dementia are older people, mainly dependent on their ageing spouse for care. The book makes amply clear that care for someone living with dementia is a twenty-four by seven, three hundred and sixty-five days work. It is never ending and at times poses special risk and challenges due the aggressive and other behaviour anomalies of the person with dementia. As it is a progressive degenerative disease, conditions worsen with time.

The author has very intelligently included views of the experts on all aspects pertaining to dementia in the last segment, as the lay reader is by then familiar with the disease and the challenges it poses. The last chapter, which is written by the author himself about the way forward, makes a very significant point about social support for the families who have a loved-one suffering from dementia. It is not possible for a family to deal with the stress alone. In India, where we take pride in the fact that our communities are a source of strength for any individual member, we must make an attempt to increase information about this disease so that the persons with dementia and their families are not discriminated, but supported in the herculean task by sharing the burden.

¹ Director, Policy Research and development, HelpAge India. (anupama@helpageindia.org)

In a country like India that is ageing rapidly, this book will go a long way in spreading awareness about dementia and its impact on people; both the person with dementia and the caregivers. It will put dementia in the public purview. People can read and understand the nuances of the disease and also be like a ready reckoner. It is a reader friendly book written in a lucid style that gives comprehensive information about dementia covering clinical and social aspects very meticulously. The dilemmas and experiences of the family add human touch to the otherwise factual book. This book successfully raised very important yet neglected concerns of health, care, wellbeing and economic security of the growing population of aged in the country. However, one urgent area of concern, that is the affordability of quality care in old age, especially for chronic conditions that require sustained long-term intervention, have not found the place that it deserves in the book.