

**Eyers, I., & Waddington-Feather, A. (Eds.). (2019). *A Common Wealth of experience: Freedom fighters, child brides and other untold real-life stories*. Yankalilla, South Australia: Freestyle Publications, 212 pp. ISBN: 978-0-6483159-3-3**

Reviewed by Nidhi Gupta<sup>1</sup>

The book *A Common Wealth of Experience: Freedom fighters, child brides and other untold real life stories*, edited by Ingrid Eyers and Annie Waddington-Feather, is a unique addition to the body of knowledge in the field of ageing and captures older person's life stories and experiences of growing old in varied socio-cultural, political, environmental and economic contexts. This book provides a detailed perspective about the phenomenon of ageing in African, Asian, Australian, European as well as Canadian contexts.

The stories in the book illustrate older people's life struggles and resilience coupled with the changing socio-political and economic scenario due to the development of the Commonwealth as its member's transit from being a colony into gaining and maintaining independence. Every story has two sections, the primary section is the story of the older persons and their life experiences due to the choices and circumstances and the second section of each story is about the author's learnings from the life stories of older person. It is interesting that the authors are young persons and they have reflected on what they learnt from experiences of older persons and what they would imbibe from the experiences of the older persons to improve their life experiences and perspectives, after arduous engagement with the older persons to understand their life stories. Hence, the methodology adopted by the editors in this book has a dual benefit, one presenting and disseminating life stories of seniors and the events that impact lives of people in general and at the other end engaging youngsters to pen these stories of seniors, who are the future. This methodology not just strengthens the intergenerational solidarity and bonding but also provides readership to a wide age group, who shall identify with some or the other aspect of each story. The editors and authors have been able to present the complex stories of older persons in a very simplistic manner highlighting the positive aspects of their lives and ways seniors adapted to the challenges in their lives.

The common beads in most of the stories are the essential elements to longevity like optimism, smiling in every situation, belief in self, being the change-maker to change the situation and spirituality, that have been unveiled explicitly in some stories while is implicit in others. Some

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<sup>1</sup> Department of International Health, John Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA. (drnidhi2014@gmail.com)

of the common themes that emerged from these stories are the phase of pain and sorrow, resilience, their role models and inspirations, change in social roles with age, challenges due to functional decline and health with age, while some distinct stories illustrate the cultural connotation associated with infertility, implications of being stylish, being a non-conformist, polygamy, havoc of HIV/AIDs and its implications on families, among others. The stories also highlight the role of education in Improving the perspectives of people and dealing with situations, the negotiations people make in their lives with respect to needs, wants, and desires in the trajectory of life.

The wide array of contexts, the socio-cultural, political, economic as well as environmental scenarios that shaped the lives of people and the message, they have for the next generations are an intangible resource for the mankind. In conclusion, the book provides a message that 'knowing about the past helps in future' and each story illustrates that the challenging phase of life is an opportunity for a person to be a better being, if there is optimism and zeal to remain happy in any situation. This book is an excellent read for diverse age groups, gender, people from any caste, class and nationality. Moreover, the simple linguistic tone adopted in documenting the life stories enables readers from across the globe to comprehend the meanings implicit in the writings and relate to emerging themes based on their own cultural contexts.