

Jadhav, A. (Ed.). (2021). *Rural elderly and their quest for health*. AuthorsUpFront, 309 pp. ISBN:978-93-87280-90-8

Reviewed by Nidhi Gupta¹

Rural elderly and their quest for health, edited by Abhijeet Jadhav, is a unique addition to the body of knowledge on health of older persons living in rural parts of India. This book is especially helpful for academicians, students, researchers, and practitioners, given that majority of older persons in India live in rural areas that have a unique context with respect to access to health and health care in addition to various socio, political, cultural and economic challenges.

The book provides knowledge about various dimensions of ageing, the experience of ageing in different regions of the country as well as the evolving need for multi and inter-disciplinary approaches to address ageing issues. The editor has been instrumental in developing a progressive framework to weave these diverse dimensions of ageing, and in placing adequate emphasis on the policy and programmatic response to address each of these issues in each chapter.

The edited volume has twelve chapters woven exquisitely to highlight the various aspects of ageing like demographic and epidemiological transition, human rights of older persons, health including palliative care, mental health and health care, ageing and disasters, and the programmatic and policy context to address ageing issues. Majority of the contributors of the chapters in this edited volume are stalwarts working in the field of ageing in India for several decades, who have witnessed the evolving ageing scenario due to demographic and epidemiological transition in the country, from a critical inter-disciplinary perspective.

The first three chapters discuss the demographic transition, epidemiological transition and age-related issues in addition to human rights framework for access to health for older persons. These are foundational chapters that are followed by more detailed discussions on mental health, and access to palliative care. Other chapters delve into important yet less talked about issues like ageing and disasters and sexual and reproductive health of older persons living in rural areas. Such chapters may very well be considered as a unique feature of this book. To give the reader details of the policy and programmatic response to ageing, the book includes chapters such as 'universal health coverage through public funded health insurance for the elderly', 'public health programs and future needs', 'social support system for elderly' and 'elderly well-being: insights and priorities from rural sector'. The book also has a chapter

¹ Department of International Health, John Hopkins University. (drnidhi2014@gmail.com)

which specifically discusses the role and status of Geriatrics for older persons living in rural areas. Considering the varied dimensions covered in the book, in an easily comprehensible language, this book may be used as a basic reading for students interested to understand ageing in India especially in rural context.

From a critical perspective, inclusion of a dedicated chapter on the status of older women and their specific needs in rural context would have made the content of the book richer, even though various chapters in the book have highlighted the issue of feminisation of ageing in India. When reflecting on the body of literature on ageing in India, I would say that although there are some existing literature on ageing in India, such as the *India ageing report*, (UNFPA, 2017), this book did provide an additional contribution, especially in relation to health aspects of older persons living in rural areas, thus making it a unique publication. This edited volume provides a comprehensive range of evolving ageing issues, which makes it an essential reading for students and researchers interested in understanding aging in rural context in India and similar contexts.

References

United Nations Population Fund. (2017). *Caring for our elders: Early responses. India ageing report -2017*. <https://india.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/India%20Ageing%20Report%20-%202017%20%28Final%20Version%29.pdf>