



## Editorial Note

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As the South Asian Journal of Tourism and Hospitality (SAJTH) embarks on Volume IV Issue I of 2024, we find ourselves at a critical juncture in South Asia's ever-evolving landscape of tourism and hospitality. The industry continues to navigate a complex environment shaped by shifting traveler preferences, emerging trends, and the interplay between traditional tourism practices and digital advancement. Against this backdrop, this issue presents a collection of insightful studies that shed light on contemporary challenges and opportunities, contributing to the ongoing discourse on sustainable and inclusive tourism in the region.

The first paper investigates millennial tourists' characteristics and travel behaviors in island destinations such as Sri Lanka. Through a qualitative approach, this study uncovers key insights into millennial travelers' interactions with various stakeholders in the tourism industry. It highlights their preference for independence, authenticity, and engagement with the informal sector over formal stakeholders. The findings provide valuable implications for tourism service providers and destination management organisations seeking to tailor their offerings to this influential traveler segment.

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Shifting the focus to domestic tourism, our second paper explores the unique features, challenges, and potential solutions for developing domestic tourism in Sri Lanka's Southeastern dry zone. This study, grounded in qualitative research, highlights significant characteristics such as the predominance of religious and leisure travel, short stays, weekend travel patterns, and a preference for budget-friendly accommodations. The study also identifies critical barriers, including infrastructure deficiencies, low government support, and inadequate awareness programs, offering strategic recommendations for enhancing the domestic tourism experience.

The third paper takes an in-depth look at solo travel content creators in Sri Lanka, an emerging yet understudied niche in tourism research. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, this study examines destination choices and behavioral patterns before, during, and after their solo travels. The findings reveal that content creators continue prioritising unexplored and culturally rich destinations, with their motivations rooted in personal discovery and storytelling. The fourth paper in this issue addresses an often-overlooked area in rural tourism—service quality. Employing an Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) framework, this study evaluates tourists' perceptions of service quality attributes in rural tourism settings. By identifying key factors influencing satisfaction and areas needing improvement, the research offers valuable guidance for policymakers and service providers striving to enhance the rural tourism experience.

Additionally, this issue features a book review on the Routledge Handbook of Hospitality Marketing, edited by Dogan Gursoy, offering a critical review of this important book that targets the dynamic and evolving field of hospitality marketing.

As SAJTH continues to provide a platform for scholarly contributions, we extend our gratitude to the researchers, reviewers, and editorial team whose efforts have made this issue possible. Through interdisciplinary collaborations and rigorous research, we aim to foster a deeper understanding of tourism and hospitality in South Asia, promoting sustainability, innovation, and inclusivity.

We hope this issue sparks meaningful discussions and inspires further research that will shape the future of tourism in the region. As we move forward, let us embrace the opportunities ahead with resilience, adaptability, and a shared commitment to excellence in tourism and hospitality.