



Editorial Note

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It is our pleasure to present the second issue of Volume Two of the South Asian Journal of Tourism and Hospitality (SAJTH). The majority of South Asian nations have reopened their borders with few restrictions for travelers, more than two years after the coronavirus pandemic put an end to international travel. An economically damaged community is relieved to see tourists back, but this comes at a price. Further, the tourism sector is negatively impacted due to the political and economic instability in the South Asian region. However, there is a boom in technological advancement across the industry. Since new trends and advances within various sectors are likely to impact all tourism in the area, we are especially interested in specific contributions to the future of the tourism industry in this volume.

Additionally, South Asia comprises a wealth of excellent tourism destinations and attractions that might be critical tools in eradicating the region's ongoing poverty. The regional tourism potential, however, has gone chiefly untapped. In this volume, the SAJTH has chosen to explore how to integrate technology and human resources for the development of the tourism sector in the region.

We dedicate this issue to Mr. H.G. Piyasiri, who served the Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka for the last three decades. Mr. Piyasiri obtained his first degree from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. He completed his first Master's in Linguistics at the University of Kelaniya while the second Masters in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) at the Open University of Sri Lanka. Further, he completed the National Teaching Diploma at Pasdunrata Teaching College.

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Mr. Piyasiri began his career as an Instructor in English attached to the Sabaragamuwa Affiliated University on 15th June 1993. His extensive service rendered to the university extended for almost three decades. Firstly, Mr. Piyasiri served as an Instructor in the Social Sciences & Languages Faculty, teaching Language Structure & Literature until he joined the Faculty of Management Studies (FMS). A few years later, Mr. Piyasiri joined as a permanent member of the FMS and was affiliated with the Department of Accountancy & Finance. He was one of the pioneering pillars of FMS Business English & Business Communication courses. Further, he played a significant and diligent role in developing and shaping the curriculum of the Business English & Business Communication courses. Until his retirement in 2022, Mr. Piyasiri devoted his career to FMS, shaping and enriching thousands of undergraduates.

Mr. Piyasiri was the founding member of the two courses, Diploma in English and Higher Diploma in English which are currently conducted by the Centre for Open Distance Learning (CODL) of SUSL. His comprehensive service activities include coordinating the Diploma in English from 2007 to 2022 and coordinating the Higher Diploma in English from 2013 to 2021. Further, he served as the Secretary of different university societies, including the Teachers' Union (SAUC), the Welfare Society, and the Faculty Board of FMS. In addition, he has also served as one of the copy editors of the International Conference of Management Researchers (ICMR), Management Undergraduate Research Symposium (MURS), South Asian Journal of Tourism and Hospitality (SAJTH), & FMS Handbook. Indeed, Mr. H.G. Piyasiri is one of the most senior academics affiliated with the Department of Accountancy and Finance of FMS, SUSL, and one who has made important life-long contributions to the educational endeavours of SUSL students through his creative discoveries and the work that he has advanced within his research fields.

The second issue of Volume Two sets out our new knowledge in tourism and hospitality through four research papers and a book review that critically investigates contemporary issues in tourism and hospitality. The travel selfies, narcissism, destination marketing, organizational dehumanization, experiential marketing through virtual reality, and the impact of COVID – 19 epidemic on the tourism sector are discussed in this issue.

The first paper explores how travel selfies and tourists' desire for narcissism create challenges to destination marketing. The findings indicate a growing tendency among tourists to capture themselves in travel selfies while excluding unique and attractive destination attributes or shifting them to the side of the photograph, thus diluting the attention toward tourist destinations.

The second paper explores how Sri Lanka's frontline employees in the hotel industry experienced and responded to organizational dehumanisation. This study found that experiences of and responses to organisational dehumanisation were both positive and negative. Adhering to emotion and appearance management as the 'face' of the brand enabled employees to be recognised as professionals, gain social esteem, and develop a sense of belongingness with an organisation. However, on the other hand, employees suffer emotional strain associated with representing the emotional proletariat and handling constant discrepancies between preferences and organisational requirements.

The next paper examines how Virtual Reality (VR) can be used for experiential marketing in the hospitality industry in Sri Lanka. As per the findings, the VR experience is explained under two themes. First, VR is an innovative marketing medium that offers opportunities to attract prospective customers. The second findings show that VR provides an immersive user experience that facilitates hotels to reach their customers with higher interactions.

The fourth paper investigates the impact of the COVID – 19 epidemic on the Tourism sector of Sri Lanka while identifying appropriate strategies to rebuild the tourism sector by overcoming the pandemic. The findings showed that many hotels and restaurants began retrenching employees and terminating casual and temporary workers' services due to loss of income. Moreover, backward linkages, notably the association between the host community and tourism businesses in Sri Lanka, have been deeply affected.

Finally, a critical review of the book titled “Tourism Management, Marketing, and Development” by Marcello M. Mariani, Wojciech Czakon, Dimitrios Buhalis, and Ourania Vitouladiti is carried out. The reviewers identified the book as an invaluable resource for organizations and people working in the tourism and marketing industries to comprehend the nature of disruptive technological forces, the necessity for innovation, and how to stay ahead of development.

In honor of this auspicious occasion, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to all of the authors for their insightful research articles, to the reviewers for their helpful criticism that helped the papers reach publishable status, and to the language editors for their support of the Journal.