



Editorial Note

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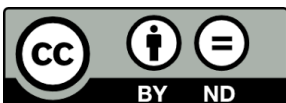
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The *South Asian Journal of Tourism and Hospitality (SAJTH)* presents Volume V, Issue I (2025) as another important milestone in advancing scholarly discourse within the dynamic and evolving landscape of tourism and hospitality in South Asia. Although this issue was originally scheduled for release in July 2025, its publication now reflects our continued commitment to maintaining academic rigour, quality, and relevance in disseminating impactful research.

The tourism and hospitality sector across South Asia continues to undergo significant transformation, shaped by sustainability imperatives, socio-economic shifts, and evolving stakeholder expectations. This issue brings together a collection of scholarly contributions that collectively address critical dimensions of sustainability, inclusivity, gender dynamics, and service excellence—offering both theoretical insights and practical implications for the region.

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The first paper examines the impact of community participation on sustainable development in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, with a particular focus on the mediating role of marine tourism development. Utilising a quantitative approach and the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM), the study demonstrates that active engagement of local communities significantly enhances sustainable development outcomes. Importantly, the findings highlight marine tourism as a key mechanism through which community participation translates into tangible socio-economic and environmental benefits. This research underscores the necessity of integrating local voices into tourism policy and planning to ensure long-term sustainability in coastal destinations.

The second paper explores the gendered dimensions of decision-making power within small-scale tourism enterprises in Hikkaduwa, Sri Lanka. Through a mixed-method exploratory approach, the study reveals that deeply embedded socio-cultural norms and patriarchal structures continue to limit women's participation in strategic decision-making processes. Despite their substantial contributions to the tourism economy, women remain underrepresented in leadership roles and are often confined to lower-level positions. This study calls for targeted interventions to enhance women's empowerment, financial independence, and equitable participation in tourism-related enterprises.

The third paper investigates transformative capitals in rural tourism and their role in fostering sustainable livelihoods, using a case study from Char Kukri Mukri in Bangladesh. Drawing on qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis, the study identifies institutional and social capital as pivotal in transforming and mobilising other livelihood assets. In contexts characterised by vulnerability—such as natural disasters, limited infrastructure, and constrained economic opportunities—the strengthening of both formal and informal institutions, particularly through the involvement of non-governmental organisations, emerges as critical for achieving sustainable development outcomes.

This issue also features a book review of *Service Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality: Insights from Asia*, edited by K. Thirumaran, Dirk Klimkeit, and Chun Meng Tang. The review highlights the book's comprehensive exploration of service excellence through multiple lenses, including service design, customer-centric operations, digital transformation, and resource management. Drawing on diverse

empirical and conceptual contributions, the book provides valuable insights into achieving competitive advantage in Asia's experience-driven tourism and hospitality sector, reinforcing the central role of service excellence in delivering customer value and satisfaction.

As we continue to strengthen SAJTH as a platform for high-quality academic contributions, we extend our sincere appreciation to the authors, reviewers, and editorial team for their dedication and scholarly rigour. Their collective efforts ensure the journal's continued growth and relevance in addressing pressing issues within tourism and hospitality.

We hope that the studies presented in this issue will stimulate meaningful academic dialogue, inform policy and practice, and inspire future research across South Asia and beyond. As the region navigates an increasingly complex tourism landscape, fostering sustainability, inclusivity, and innovation remains paramount.

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